

*Brother
Saul,*

by DONN BYRNE



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BROTHER SAUL



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BROTHER SAUL

by DONN BYRNE

Author of

"HANGMAN'S HOUSE," "THE WIND BLOWETH,"
and "FIELD OF HONOR"



GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers*

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First printing, April, 1927
Second printing, April, 1927
Third printing, May, 1927

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

DOMINAM AMICAMQUE
AD
DOROTHEAM

Four angels around me stand:
One angel at my right hand;
One to watch; one to pray;
One to keep false thoughts away.
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John!
Bless the sheet I write upon!

Paraphrase of a Cornish child's prayer.

The author of "Brother Saul" has requested the publishers to state that in reading the text:

"Now about that time Herod the King stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword." (Acts of the Apostles, xii, 1 and 2.)

he follows certain modern critics in their contention that James the Just is meant, and not the son of Zebedee.

BROTHER SAUL

Παῦλος ἐπεὶ θεῖον σέλας οὐρανοῦ ἔδρακεν ἅπτην,
φωτὸς ἀπειρεσίου γαῖαν ἔπλησεν ὅλην.

Paul, having seen face to face the divine light of heaven,
filled all the earth with infinite light.

Inscription on the apse of an old church in Byzantium.

BROTHER SAUL

CHAPTER I

ALL he knew was this: that after listening to his paunchy, bearded, shrewd father for a time, after looking at his mother troubled in her wisdom, after feeling in his sister's eyes a keen hostility, he would arise and leave the house, knowing they were all wrong. His father's friendship, joviality with the Roman commanders, to whose quartermasters he sold tents and sails for the transport department, with whom he contracted for timber, made him uncomfortable. For at home his father's strictures on the Empire were harsh. The Roman citizenship, of which he made full use abroad, at home he spat on. Indeed, Saul was not certain that his father did not contribute with a lavish hand to the societies in Jerusalem who were only awaiting the day when they could arise with fire and sword. . . . Now and then emissaries from Jerusalem, silent, bitter men, would appear in the house; men who talked at length to his elder, clever sister, who was bitterly anti-Roman, bitter as gall. At these times his father seemed afraid, constrained. . . .

The young Saul would occasionally attack his

father for this inconsistency. But his father would wink and smile.

"When you are as old as I am," he would say in his rapid, fluent, faulty Greek, "when you are as old as I am, my boy, you will have tact, diplomacy."

"Huckstering, adulteration."

"That I should hear a son of mine say that! I should die! And what profit do I get? I work for you! I work for your sister! I bring myself to an early grave. And my son"—his tragic voice and vile Greek were grotesque—"calls me a thief, a good-for-nothing, a murderer. Oh, I should die!"

But the elder man's hypocrisy made the young Saul only the more angry.

Strangely, the boy liked his father best when the old man was heightened by wine. Then he would become a little pompous, telling how greatly the Romans held him in esteem, lording it over kinsman and countryman. All his near-knavery fell from him then, and he became the child Saul loved. The boy who had ventured in sailing-boats around the Pillars of Hercules, who had been in Abyssinia, to whom trading came as second, not as first nature.

The old man would enumerate his riches, and say:

"You will be a great rabbi, Saul, great as Hillel. And rich, too, Saul. Rich as a proconsul. Look, darling, to be a merchant is to have cunning, but to be a rabbi is to have wisdom. Learning is wisdom, my dear, and riches is power. Men who have both are kings, good kings. Solomon ben-David was very learned and very rich. The children will point you out, saying: 'There is Saul of Tarsus, a learned

rabbi, very wise, rich as Herod, an admirable, powerful man. His father, Cisai, son of Semei, of the tribe of Benjamin, was a very worthy man.' "

The face, furrowed into wrinkles by the hardships of his youth and by chicane, would take on an appealing childish look, and while his mother would be troubled in her dignity, and his sister, Enid, would be hard in her mind, hard as those Athenians of the Stoa, yet Saul would feel a rush of sympathy and kindness for the old man, feel as though he wished to protect him from the bothered recriminations of his wife, from the cold contempt of his daughter. But the next day the old man would be as usual, knavish and bland. . . .

All the elegancies of their rich house were due to his mother's taste—the rugs of marvelous intricate coloring, so old, some of them, that they dated from the first building of the Temple, at least tradition said; the curtains of beautifully woven silk; the candlesticks of cunning workmanship. His mother's folk were Persian Jews, and had in that fabled land of the sun acquired subtlety of taste and subtlety of mind surpassing that of their kinsfolk in Palestine and Greece. The women of the Persian Jews were the rulers of the house, so Saul had heard, and he could quite believe it. Although she seemed concerned only with her house, superintending the labors of the cooking-women, seeing them disguise the flesh of the beasts killed according to ritual into appetizing dishes, turn the soft silver of the Mediterranean fish into crisp gold, arrange the fruits of the garden in wide silver dishes on broad leaves;

golden oranges, purple figs, and the great saffron melon; seeing her bond-servants carry out their regimen, yet quietly she guided the destinies of the family fortune. For all she was nearly two score, she had the slim body of a girl and a keen Arabian face. For all her slimness and handsome features, she was not a woman to love. Some weakness in his father's character had driven him to this woman, who had no weakness. Though her body were still, her mind never was. When she was seated occupied with her needlework, her mind nosed a trail as the Arabs' hounds did. Now that she had her husband in hand, she was thinking about her son, Saul knew. And he knew, too, that she felt her son was more difficult to conquer than her man. Whether she loved him or not Saul was not sure. But she was afraid for him, for his body and mind. He was a stout, well made, handsome boy; but twice a year, and sometimes more frequently, he would be ill. For days an oppression would hang about him, a heavy reddish atmosphere; his eyes would not see properly. And then at one exact minute, all would become too much for him, and involuntarily he would start running, and then he would remember nothing, until he opened his eyes again to find some friend, or a stranger perhaps, dashing water in his face. He felt weak, but well, and all the oppression had passed.

"I must have fainted," Saul would say.

"Yes, you fainted," the stranger would say, sympathetically, "but you'll be all right now."

He would say nothing to his mother of this, but his mother, he felt, always knew. Nor did she say

anything. His mother had no sympathy with weakness, outwardly at any rate. His mother would not accept a fact that displeased her. She wished the fact remedied. She consulted physicians about his fainting spells, but the results of these consultations she kept from Saul. Better ignore it.

She was afraid, for Saul, of his body, but she was afraid of his mind, for himself and for herself and for all of them. Every thought in her husband's mind she knew, as a chess-player is aware of the motive in his opponent's move. But Saul's she could not fathom. He locked his mind against her as a merchant locks his treasure against thieves. She distrusted him, because she could not guide him. The only struggle that took place between his mother and father was over the question of Saul's work in life. His father was all for making a great rabbi out of Saul, having all the awed wonder of and deep yearning for education that the uncultivated man has, believing that in the rolls of parchment was some secret that, were he himself in possession of it with his native gifts, would prove a touchstone to fame, a short cut to fortune, a philosophy to blunt the keen edge of death. But a woman distrusts books. What a man learns in books makes him restless, makes him critical. . . . Saul was a difficult boy, a headstrong boy. It would be much better for him to follow his father in the tent-factory and shipchandlery business; to marry a good Jewish girl, who would take care of him; to marry soon. He was sixteen now; in a few more years let him marry, and all this independence of thought, this musing over

Greek wisdom and learning, would pass. Some good, pretty, laughing girl, who would enmesh him as an evil woman might, but in a good way. Other boys might adventure in the head, and for others she would put off marriage many years, knowing herself, cynically, how little men got out of it. Saul would be better in a home, married. She distrusted her son, because she distrusted herself. There were strange backgrounds in herself into which she had never adventured. She knew that for herself a house and problems were better, so it would be better for Saul. She was not quite sure if she loved Saul—her needle flashed in and out of the silk brocade as though she had no thought in the world but for it—but she respected the boy. She sat there, slim, cool, handsome, and felt that none knew what was in her mind. Her Persian subtlety was deep as the Dead Sea. She was inscrutable, she thought, as that image in the land of Egypt, near Memphis, she had heard the Alexandrian Jews speak about, the face that no glory of rising sun or moon could make wonder. Unreadable. But to the boy she wasn't inscrutable at all. . . .

Between Saul and his sister there was a bitter enmity. She was a thinnish girl, with her mother's fine eyes and a slackness about chin and jaw that her father probably had, underneath his broad, shallow, fat man's beard. She was a dark, secretive girl, intensely Jewish, forever dreaming of bygone glories and plotting for triumphs to come. She was always reading of the Maccabees, and imagining herself one of the flame-like women who sent their

men-folk out to die defending the city walls, crying, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One!" Or imagining herself as Judith, which was the daughter of Merari, the son of Ox, who showed proudly the head of Holofernes, the chief captain of the army of Assur, crying, "And the Lord hath smitten him by the hand of a woman"; or as Jael, who slew Sisera. Actually she could not bear the sight of blood, and the killing of birds taken in the fowlers' nets—the mention alone of it made her white and dizzy. But in her mind she was a heroine of the Jews.

Where she had her mother's eyes, chieftain's eyes, and her father's indefiniteness of jaw, Saul had his father's understanding gray eyes, as they were when unclouded by craft, and his mother's chin. His sister recognized the power in him, and hated him for it. He would laugh at her contention that out of Jewry was no goodness, no power, no magnificence. When she wished to argue with him, to compare Solomon's Temple to some wonder of the Greeks, as the Athenian Acropolis, or the army of the Maccabees to the hardy, exactly trained Roman legions, Saul would not argue at all, but turn away laughing. She would be cold and white with hatred. If he had only been as she was, intensely national, he would have been an adored brother. The weakness she suspected in herself rebelled against the strength in him, when the strength was given as she felt to traitorous ways. The boy was religious, and not political. He admired the subtle minds of the Greeks, the suave Roman manners, but for their religious philosophy he had contempt. So his sister would wait until he

was off guard, wait for weeks to get in a stab that would hurt. She would wait until he was soft, glowing, and then sting him and esteem it good. And she would glory in the resentment of his eyes.

On one occasion by the river, her brother left her to go up to an old rabbi, so old, so frail, that his body seemed a thin shell. There was such dignity in his face that the clever Greeks and the worldly Romans looked at him with a reverent wonder. He might have been an old woman, her children borne and reared and gone away and all her toil done, so little of sex was there about him, all worldliness having been worn away by suffering and thought. Saul kissed his hand and asked a blessing, and received it, though there was no recognition in the old man's eyes.

"He is just waiting, waiting," said Saul.

"But who is he?"

"He is the old rabbi who circumcised me."

His sister waited an instant, and then laughed.

"How funny!" she said. "I had quite forgotten you were a Jew."

CHAPTER II

THEY were all wrong in their narrow way, Saul knew. His father had not the nobility, the dignity, the seed of Benjamin should have. His mother had brains, but would not use them. She was like some beautiful, dark animal in a hidden place, preferring rocks and crevices to the golden sun. She was secret as a mole. And his sister had fire, but no sense. This city of Tarsus, all this fair Cilicia, his father cared nothing for it, his mother hated it, his sister despised it. . . .

The city was always a wonder to him. The Jews and Arabs laughed at it, holding Jerusalem and Damascus to be surpassing cities; but the red plain of Tarsus, red earth and red poppies, and the silver sea before it, and back of it the mountains of Tarsus, dour, threatening as an army of horsemen, held, would always hold, his loyalty. Flat-roofed houses, red flowers and green trailing vines, and Cydnus, the river that in spring was turbulent as Gaulish legionaries, in summer gentle as woman, surely Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, were not the equal of it. No, nor Jordan, flowing sluggishly, muddily to the Bitter Sea. Out of the dark mountains it rushed, through the belt of pine and oak and walnut, and came down past wheat-field and corn-field and orchard. The tall cypress and the poplar

and the silver olive-tree lined its banks, and the clematis and honeysuckle clustered near it. Always were there birds near it, throaty nightingales in the summer-time, and patient, crimson-backed pelicans. From the mountains it came, fearsome as men with daggers, but it moved through Tarsus with the shy, proud joy of brides.

Older than Athens or Rome, it had about it, had this ancient city, the quiet comfortable air of one who has seen life, so that nothing can astonish him. From the folk in the mud huts by the river to the patricians in their marble houses with gardens inclosed, all had an air of polished cosmopolitanism. Damascus was only an accident in the desert, Jerusalem a holy place of Judea, Rome an upstart military city, Athens a cold intellectual center, but Tarsus was a city of life. There was nothing you couldn't see, couldn't do, in Tarsus. A little work, much sunshine, many kisses. What did it matter who governed? Babylonian, Greek, or Roman. They came with keen faces and keen swords, and they loitered a little, waiting until the river went down, until summer came somewhat further in. And in the daytime in the gardens the almond and peach blossoms dropped like snowflakes, and at night the nightingales sang; and they laid off their heavy armor and put on garments of Arabian silk, of Chinese or Arabian silk. And there were jars of dark red wine, while the river fell, fell so slowly, and women with dark red mouths. It was a tale like one told in the bazaars, always the same, yet always, to men of the world like the Tarsans, interesting.

They came, they saw, they were conquered. Sardana-palus in his golden tomb. That last one whom their fathers knew—what was his name? It was such a common one. Mark Antony. The huge proconsul with the virile Latin mind, soldier and philosopher. Up to Tarsus in her golden barge came Cleopatra, up their own Cydnus. Her mind was subtle as Mark Antony's, so subtle that she did not argue with him. She enmeshed him with her eyes, deep, dark as fish-ponds, and her body, white as a rose. That they both came to grief later was by politics, accursed of the gods and wise men. One horde came, another took their place. They came growling like bears, they remained gentle as gazelles. The women and the nightingales captured them. Perhaps even the Romans might pass away, foolish as that might sound. But few imposts, days in which you could work a little and laugh a lot, nights in which you could drowse and make love. What did it matter what government you had? said the Tarsans; they weren't like the men of Judea, always turbulent, wanting a king, a government entirely of their own. Surely there were wine and flowers and women enough for all. What was all the trouble for? said the Tarsans.

So much life was there in the Asian city that one never had a chance to consider whence it came or whither it went. Now and then through the press of the buyers and sellers, gaudy Arab and quiet Greek, came a procession with a limp bundle on a bier, if of an Arab, followed by women screaming and beating the air with palms; if of a Greek, pre-

ceded by priests whose faces were like masks of olive-wood, carved silent faces with grave eyes, who might have some secret, and again who might not. And over the screaming market-place, the streets tumbling as rivers, would come an instant's silence, a chill as of the ague. A moment's thundering silence. And then once more shrill cries. Down Cydnus came rafts of pine and oak trees for the ship-yards, poled by short muscular men singing long chanteys. Clack of the weaver's shuttle and purring of the potter's wheel. The cry of the silk-seller as he sat cross-legged in his dim shop: "O virgins, a covering for your delights." From the coppersmiths' booths came the small clank of little hammers, the hiss of the bellows' draft against the live flame of the tripod. Scatter and cursing as a caravan came in from Ephesus. Four score laden camels in a long line, their heads bobbing, their queer, bright, snake-like eyes. All in a row they went, reptilian head close to small tassel of tail and vast steep rump, led by a little donkey with a bell. The sherbet-seller with his red jar on his hip: "O my uncles, sherbet cooled with snow!" Tock-tock-tock of galloping asses laden with goats' hair for the looms, small Arab boys welting them onward with green withes. "Faster, O fathers of idleness, faster!" Whack! tock-tock-tock-tock! Arabs from the desert would pass along in garments striped red and white, their eyes blank with wonder, walking with their horseman's walk. First one leg stiff forward, break at the knee. Now the other leg. Drag the heels. And each, as he walked, carried in one hand a half-eaten pomegranate or

apple, in the other hand a flower. Or a mounted Arab might dash along on his high saddle, and finding his way blocked, turn by rearing his horse around. "O father of recklessness; O son of an incontinent mother," the merchants would rage against him, while near-by some vast African showed his white teeth and red throat in bellowing laughter. The rose-seller passed by with his tray of buds: "O sweetness! O color!" The thump of a Roman company as it passed along officered by some huge Gaul or small wiry Greek. Hip! Hip! Hip, hip, hip! Bare feet and heavy leather shoes; leather jacket shining with brass plates; shield of bull-hide, long spear and short bronze sword. As they passed fully accoutred under the sharp Asian sun, they left behind an odor of masculinity that was like a reproach in the perfumed streets. From their booths, the merchants of perfumes, the dealers in amber, the sellers of precious stones, the scribes with their tackle for writing, looked at them with contempt. So barbarian, so energetic. From his cool retiring-place the wine-vender pointed to his buffalo-skins filled with wines, red as roses some of them and bitter with orange-peel, and others yellow as topaz, sweet as honey. "Oh, cheer thy heart," he urged, and rattled his brass drinking-cups, "oh, cheer thy heart!"

From the Tarsus range, from the plains, from Syria, the camels and donkeys came laden with the black hair of goats, to be woven into tents for the desert men; into sails for the native ships; into clothing for the meaner citizens. From the river, where the booths with their looms were, came oc-

casionally, on the cold breeze from Taurus, the rank ammoniacal smell of the goat. The goat that was accursed, was led into the desert from Jerusalem for the sins of the people, the goat that the mysterious evil tribes of the Lebanon worshiped with the peacock, the goat, evil as the serpent. . . . From the river-bank it came, when the wind was easterly. The goat with the mysterious terrifying eyes. But the same rank abomination came when the wind was not easterly, nor did it come from the river-bank. Feast-days of Romans and Greeks, and feast-days of Syrians, when through the narrow streets, out of the groves, went the careless population robed in white. They had white garments and dark eyes. In honor of Apollo, in honor of Hermes, they had cool white garments and dark burning eyes. Before them came the priests with graven granite faces, with a shallow smile like bleak sunshine on their curved lips. The women carried cyclamen flowers, purple as their mouths, and they whispered to Saul: "Come, Jewish boy. You will like our God. Our God is not an aged, jealous God. Our God is young and pleasant." Their cymbals tinkled; the gold clappers in their hands gave out a small, ringing music. But above the scent of myrtle and cyclamen, of soft spice-rose and harsh sea-rose, clove pink and amber sea-poppies, came the rankness of the goat. With their olive skins and melting eyes the Syrian girls went to the worship of Sargon, who was Sardanapalus. Down to his statue by the sea they went, where his stone face, his soft girl's face frozen into stone, smiled

vacantly over the plain, the fingers of his right hand caught in the gesture of snapping. And beneath his statue in the Assyrian letter was his name and his fame and his wisdom. "Sardanapalus, the son of Anacyndaroxes, built Anchiale and Tarsus in one day. Eat, drink, be merry: the rest is not worth—" the statue snapped its fingers—"even that." On a pyre of dry cypress-wood they burned his effigy stuffed with frankincense and spices. The perfumed smoke rose like a pillar in the air. With a loud cry they called, "Sargon is risen." And kissed one another with moist, evil mouths, men kissing women, and women women, and men men. "Sargon is risen," they called. And above the odor of burning spices came the vileness of the goat. . . . And they also had a festival in honor of Semiramis, whom they worshiped as Venus, who was the ancient Astoreth, loathed by the Jews. With bound black hair, hair bound with fillets of twisted gold, the women went to the groves. Their eyes were blackened, so that they seemed so deep as to be terrible. They wore purple dresses, the purple of grapes dripping with wine, and chains of amber-colored crocuses and woven golden berries, and some of them caught at Saul's sleeve, saying, "Semiramis, the queen, desires thee!" so that he was terrified and fled from them, and they laughed . . . And in the groves, the air, heavy with crushed violets, sweet blue and soft white violets, was tainted by the ancient evil. . . .

He would go down to the harbor where the ships lay. Down to the sea, clear as wine, harsh as small

wine. Under the bows of the ships, under the carven figureheads, under the white eyes of the Egyptian craft, under the signs of the pagan gods, Apollo and Castor and Pollux, and the gods of the sea, Ino and Palæmon, and Hermonax, the net-caster, against beams and strakes the sea rippled, making a song uncloyed by passion, firm, clear as the sea itself. And all that was Greek in Saul made a song too, an unworded song. The young Syrian moon came out, shrill as bugles; and looking westward—his eyes were forever westward—he could distinguish in his mind the Greek islands that had such a call for him, the islands that had names sharp and clean as spear-heads. Isles past which he knew he would one day adventure. Rhodes; red-earthed Crete; Samothrace, prowed like a ship; the rock-like Sparta; Samos; Chios, of the resin-flavored wine; Paros, the pearl-string of the Cyclades; Naxos, Paros, Melos; Eubœa, alive with violets; Attica, its golden army of flower-conquering bees; Andros, white with narcissus; Imbros, Tinos, Delos, their harsh cleanliness a background for the red-hulked, great-beaked ships that slid past them, quiet as gulls. Salt air and white hyacinth and good coarse sand. Ah, Samothrace, ah, Eubœa! Clean, men's islands.

But as he stood there, drawing into his body the very spirit of the great inland sea, out of some of the houses of the waterfront, where lamps burned before statues of Venus and Egyptian Isis, there would come the plucking of lute-strings and a Grecian song:

If you can count the green population
Of the leaves on the tree;

If you can number the shining myriad
Of sands in the sea;
Of grass the innumerable blades,
Then count these fragile maids:
Of Athenian girls a score,
To be safe add fifteen more.
Add to these
Nine Corinthian mistresses—

Everywhence in the laughing city came the song of love. By noontime and by moontime it rang out. It tainted for Saul the clean sea-wind. Under the golden sun they were shameless as the folk of the Cities of the Plain. Under the shrill Syrian moon, they made love, the sailors trolling their ribald catches in the presence of the cool, contemptuous stars, singing of girls whose names were like whispers of love, Apollodate, and Heliodora, Lesbia, Hypsithulla, Hippomene. From the gardens where Cydnus fed fountains that broke into rockets, into rosettes of foam came thick urgent whispering: "Lais, small woman. You are white as sea-crust. Your slender breast is curved, white like narcissus. Your feet are like silver, like molded rare silver, small Lais. . . . O lover, the gold on the temple doors is not more golden than your head. The gold on your sandals is not more precious than your curled head. . . . O Lais, white as privet, white as snow on a green bough. . . . Lover, Greek lover, your wrists are as brass. There is light from your cropped head. . . ." It repelled Saul as an army with banners.

All through the sensuous pagan city life boiled

like a seething pot, life clamored with cymbals and trumpets. By grove and in temple the false gods smiled emptily, Apollo and Adonis, Sargon of the Syrians, Greek Aphrodite and thick-lipped Egyptian Isis. "You have asked for gifts, here they are: red flowers, red wine, red mouths. Hurry, for listen: the flowers wither, the wine sours, the mouths pale." So that it was a relief to Saul to return to his home, where life was ordered, like a measured song in place of clashing cymbals and blaring trumpets, where life was cool and chaste. He would touch the metal case on the side of his father's door where the parchment verses were inclosed; and, kissing his hand, he would say with a new fervor, under the shrill Syrian moon:

Hear, O Israel; our God is one God;
Thou shalt love him with all thy heart, and soul and might.
The words which I command thee shall be upon thy heart:
Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children,
And shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house,
When thou walkest by the way,
When thou liest down, and when thou risest up,
Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand;
They shall be as frontlets upon thy brow.
And thou shalt write them
Upon the door-posts of thy house, and on thy gate.

CHAPTER III

OF all the people who visited the Weaver's House, none was so welcome, none so amusing to Saul as his Uncle Joachim. He was a fat, jolly man, dressed with the elegance of a Roman aristocrat, but his race was never in doubt for a moment. He was always clean-shaven, so that his jaws and cheeks seemed blue, and his hair was beautifully trimmed. His black eye had a merry twinkle. It was impossible not to smile when you saw Uncle Joachim. Even the most bigoted Romans and Greeks, who hated the Hebrews, liked the man. His dress was childishly magnificent. A tunic of yellow silk covered his not unpleasing heaviness, and he wore boots of badger-skin dyed red. On his right hand was a ring with a vast emerald. On his left a ruby glowed. Saul used to laugh at these rings.

"Laugh, laugh!" Uncle Joachim would say. "I should get angry. Not I! Do the Greek merchants of Hippos and Sapphoris laugh when they see them? Men with millions. It's, 'Yes, Emir,' and, 'No, Emir,' and, 'Walk on my face, Prince.' Go on; laugh. I should be troubled."

You started laughing at Uncle Joachim, and you finished up laughing with him. There was no defense against a man like that. So had the procurator of Judea found out. So had the tetrarch of

Galilee. . . . Uncle Joachim was not really Saul's uncle, but his father's boyhood friend. They two, of all the children of their district, had ended up fortunate and rich. Each knew, appreciated, the other's struggle from the days when Saul's father had started his little weaving business in Cilicia, never certain where the wages for next week's work were coming from, and Uncle Joachim had started out into Africa with a chapman's pack. Now Saul's father wove tents for the Roman army in Cilicia, a vast contract, and Uncle Joachim had recently sold at a huge profit a hundred elephants to the army in Judea. Where Uncle Joachim's activities began and ended, none knew. This aqueduct, that section in a new city, as Tiberias. People spoke of Uncle Joachim in hushed breath. To Greek and Roman he was the merchant prince. But to Saul's father he was the lad he knew in his youth. To Saul he was Uncle Joachim. The old man and Joachim had a great tie in common. They had been in fairy-land together, the world they had owned as boys.

Uncle Joachim would descend on the Tarsan merchant, bellowing, slapping him on the back.

"Hey, father of monkeys! Hey, you son of a camel! Look at your whiskers. Gray. Getting old. Look at me, hey, young, hey, graceful." And he would pirouette like a dancer.

Strangely enough, Saul's mother, who was hard, narrow as a cleft in a rock, liked Uncle Joachim. She would suffer things from him she would from none else. Uncle Joachim was, as he said, broad-minded, but broad was a mild word. He would go

down to the race-track, and had an uncanny knack of picking winners from among the charioteers. He would wager in staggering amounts. Also he would dine with the Roman officers, and sit late drinking wine with them until the morning broke, and he would come down from the guest-room next day very sad, very sorry for himself.

"Never again," he would say, "never again. I swear it. Never again. Oh, my head, my poor head!"

"Serve you right," Saul's mother would say.

"You have no heart, Esther. You have got a stone where your heart should be."

"Why don't you get married?" Saul's mother would comment. "Then you would stay at home and not make a fool of yourself."

"You ask me why I don't marry. You!" Uncle Joachim would say in mock distress. "You should ask me, you of all the world. Oh, I like that!"

"You are an old fool, Joachim," Saul's mother would say. "You have had no breakfast, I suppose. Would you like some herons' eggs whipped with wine?"

"You are the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys, Esther—"

"And you are an old fool, and a bad Jew!"

Strangely enough, Saul's sister, to whom everything Roman was foul, unclean, liked Uncle Joachim. Perhaps, thought Saul, that was because he was valuable. Any one so close to Herod Antipas as Uncle Joachim was worth cultivating.

On the surface Uncle Joachim was a bluff, hearty man, cosmopolitan, to use a new Greek word; one

whose smile dissolved all defense, as much at home in the black tents of the Arabs as in Herod's golden house; in the huts of the Yemen as under the painted Stoa of Athens. Yet underneath all the bluffness there was a gift for hewing straight to the heart of a thing that was rare as rubies. Give Uncle Joachim the trail of an opportunity, give him an idea to play with, and in a most extraordinary way his fat laughing face became queerly another face, the face of a thinner, keener man. The cheeks narrowed, the lips narrowed, the eyes narrowed. He was like a hawk on a still wing, a hawk swinging in wide beautiful gyres, judging time and distance. . . . He was shrewd; no Greek was shrewder. Out of his flat skull he would whip the most extraordinary of ideas, as his theory of the Golden Fleece.

"A few of the sailors tell the story of a cruise in the drinking-shops of Thessalonica and Corinth, and the country people take it up, and a literary writer gets it. Well, what do you get? You get a Golden Fleece. A wise man laughs, and says: 'There was no Golden Fleece, there was no Jason—you can't fool me. I'm a wise man.' My dear, he's wise—I should say not. But what do I, Joachim bar Ezra think? I think: Naturally there was a Jason. A clever fellow with a good boat. And naturally there was a Golden Fleece. Chinese silk, my dear, Chinese silk. Jason was the man that thought he could get it by sea, and not bring it across the Gobi, where every damn Arab and Tartar gets bakshish out of you by sticking his knife at your gullet: 'Good morning, Mr. Merchant, how was it by you?'

'Good morning, Mr. Arab, I got a nice present for your wife, God damn her!' Golden Fleece! Was it a good fleece? Well, I ask you! Was it golden? My dear, it was the father and mother of gold.

"Back of all the fairy stories, back of all the armies, back of all the kings, there's just this."

And putting his hand in his pouch he drew out a handful of the beautiful gold coins of Tarsus, marked with the figure of Hermes Eurionios, the bringer of luck.

"And so it shall be until our own Messiah shall come, the king who cares not for money."

"So you believe in the Messiah, Uncle Joachim?"

"Do I believe in the Messiah? What do you mistake me for? A pagan? A Greek? My dear, I'm not one of the Chasaidim; I know. I make money, I spend it. I drink too much wine. But I know as sure as I've these rings on my finger that our time is coming. We had a hard time in Egypt, didn't we? Where is the Pharaoh now? And in Babylon. Well, Babylon is gone. We're still here, my dear. Mark Antony, Octavian, these men are not the great Pharaoh, nor Nebuchadnezzar. Herod, the great Herod, he could twist them around his finger, like I twist this ring." And the great emerald flashed as the sun caught it.

"Didn't Herod believe that the Messiah was about to be born?"

"Naturally he believed it. So would any man have believed it if the three sheikhs of the Babylonian wizards had come to you, if you were king of the Jews, and asked, 'Where is the new king of the

Jews?' They were so old, my darling, that they were falling to pieces like old rugs, and they were so wise that they would look through you as if you were glass. 'How do you know there's a new king of the Jews born?' Herod asked. 'We read it in the stars.' 'Well, read it in the stars where he is,' says Herod, shortly. 'We will,' said they. 'Now, come back and tell me when you find him,' Herod says. The sheikhs said nothing at all. So Herod put watchers on them. My dear, they went out of Damascus Gate on their dromedaries, went right out with ten pacing camels in broad daylight, and it might have been pitch-dark. They were never seen any more."

"And did Herod believe that?" laughed Saul.

"Oh, you may laugh, my dear," said Uncle Joachim. "But you can believe me, Herod didn't laugh. What made Herod a great king, my darling, was this: When he saw anything look big and sound, he hunted for the unsoundness that might bring it down. When he saw anything look big and unsound, he looked for the soundness in it that held it together. He was thorough; that's why he was great. Herod sent for the chief priests and scribes and examined them as to where the Messiah should be born. They said: 'According to the prophet Micah, it's in Bethlehem of Judea.' So he waited for a while to see if the sheikhs would return. When they didn't, he had every man-child in Bethlehem and the coast towns of two years and under put to death, every living one. He was hard, was Herod; that's what made him great. No soft man, my darling, ever becomes great."

Saul had turned white. "For a moment's fear! On the word of three Chaldean lunatics."

"Yes, yes, my dear," Uncle Joachim sneered; "Chaldea's full of lunatics, just like a honeycomb's full of gall. But, look-at; in spite of all precaution, he didn't catch the child. He escaped to Egypt. I wager the sheikhs put a word in the mother's ear after they looked at Herod."

"So that's the end of another Messias," Saul said. "A lot of children killed, and another impostor lord-ing it in Alexandria."

"Now, now," said Uncle Joachim, and he winked. "Look-at, my dear; the boy's back in Nazareth now, and if you heard the stories I heard, it would make you wonder. Look-at; this is what the peasants say. This boy was making clay animals with a lot of other children, you know, asses, oxen, birds, you know what children make; and all the children were talking what fine animals they made; you know the way children talk and boast. This son of Mary, this boy, just says something to the animals, and they tell you the asses and oxen begin to walk, and the birds fly off—"

"Children's stories!"

"Well, if you like, my dear, children's stories. But I've known grown-ups who believed in it. There are men around Herod Antipas' court, educated men, who are certain that this boy is Elijah. They don't say much about it. Now, look-at, my dear, I tell you something else. The boy has a brother called James, and they were both out looking for dry wood. James was picking up some branches when, snick!

a viper stings him right on the hand. Now, naturally, *sholem!* good-by! The boy Jesus just blows on the wound and it heals, just blows like somebody would blow on a burn. All the country-side tells about that."

"They were out alone, weren't they?" Saul began to feel a sort of absurd enmity toward the boy Jesus.

"My darling, boys always make up a lie like that, don't they?" Uncle Joachim was sarcastic. "Now, here's another story. The schoolmaster comes to Joseph's house and says this boy ought to learn his letters. Now, remember this, my dear. This child had never seen a book in his life. The schoolmaster says: 'Say Aleph.' The lad just smiles and says, 'Aleph, Bet, Gimel, Dalet,' and so on to the end—"

"He had heard them all before," Saul laughed. "How old is he? What does he do?"

"He's a couple of years older than you, Saul, eighteen, maybe nineteen. He's a journeyman carpenter; works with his father, Joseph."

"A carpenter, and the Messias of Israel!"

"Now, what's wrong with a carpenter, my darling? Isn't it a good trade? Isn't it a clean trade? I ask you! David was a shepherd, wasn't he? And there is one thing certain"—Uncle Joachim emphasized it with a pounding of his jeweled hand—"the boy is the real descendant of David, fine old Jewish gentry. Poor! Now, what's the matter with being poor? God of Israel! I was happier when I was poor. I slept at night. All the night through. I didn't worry if a new proconsul was going to be

difficult, or some crooked fellow going to twist on me. I wish I was poor again. I'd eat wholesome food and sleep better. Yes, my dear, Jesus is poor."

"But, Uncle Joachim," Saul smiled, "I think you believe all this, about the clay oxen, and viper's bite, and Babylonian wizards—"

"Now, I haven't said I believed it," shuffled Uncle Joachim. "God of Israel! I'm a man of the world. I don't believe everything I hear. Did I say I believed it?" Uncle Joachim spoke with unnecessary warmth. "I said there was people who believed it, educated people. I didn't say I believed it."

"But you speak, you look, as if you did."

And suddenly the heated, credulous Uncle Joachim changed into the smiling Uncle Joachim Saul knew so well.

"What are you trying to do, you rascal? Trying to make a zany out of me?" He gave a burlesque frown and raised his hand in mimic anger. "Go away. I slap your face."

CHAPTER IV

§ I

ON one side lay pagan life, shiny, treacherous, treacherous as a morass with flowers. Their poets, Homer who thundered like the sea, and Virgil, and Horace, the witty suburban poet; Demosthenes, Cicero, to whom a crowd, a tribunal, was an instrument to be played; Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, who probed emotions and thought, as a surgeon probes the body, with a keen, too shining probe; Æschylus and Sophocles, who by magic made dead men live once more, in painted masks; Euclid and Archimedes, who claimed all knowledge for their province; Phidias, who could make great statues of marble, and minute golden bees—beautiful, accursed things. It had culture and grace, but the end of all the poetry, the philosophy, the knowledge, a cynical laugh: "Eat, drink, and be merry to-day, for to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow—" or else a sullen muttering: "Not to be born is better." That was it all—a philosophy to be worn as a gay garment or a dignified grave garment. But in privacy, with the garment laid aside, what then? Would Horace still the fear of death, or Socrates help a woman in labor? With the garment off, might not even a Greek exquisite be ugly, a Roman be afraid?

Though he knew his own religion to be right, yet he wished it were right otherwise than it was. He wished his people were not so tight in themselves, so sealed, like a sealed garden. God was One. God was on his majestic throne of blue hyacinth. God was old. God's commandments were wise past all wisdom of earth, but they rose in a dark mist before His face, that must never be seen of earthly man. Because it was so terrible, said the old men. Not terrible as the gods of the Greeks, terrible with beauty and passion, golden-zoned Aphrodite, her zone buckled with gold, her body white as lightning, mouth of red vervain, her eyes purple as violets, most beautiful, most terrible. But terrible as the minds of old men, warped, hard as oak. Sometimes—it might be infidelity according to the old men, but to Saul it was real—there would come a sense of God at first-fruits, when the synagogue was decked with flowers, and the children carried baskets of peeled white willow, heavy with fruits to lay before the curtain and the lamp. At new moon, too, there was a lift in his heart when he said the prayer: Blessed art Thou, O God, who renewest the moons. God was near then, not aloof on His throne of blue hyacinth, but near, so powerful as to be always kind. But the old men never saw God as this. When the new moon showed, the air was cold and fresh, so that the old men said it was chill, and went inside huddling in their fringed praying-shawls, to discuss the intricacies of the Law, as to what was the punishment for carrying a staff on the Sabbath, as to whether it was lawful to eat an egg laid on the Sab-

bath—a point much in dispute. They went into the small dark temple with its seven-branched candlestick, while outside was the moon. They bound phylacteries on head and arm, and sat before the curtain that was purple, scarlet, blue, and gold. Outside the sky was purple, scarlet, blue, and gold. They turned to the star-lamp of the synagogue and prayed, while without in the east was the lovely star called Hesperus. Outside was the moon, and God who renewed the moon, but the old men stayed inside and prayed, because outside it was chill.

Also the old men, when they left the temple and went home under the elaborate canopy of stars, gold and white stars, blue and purple, they folded their hands and said smugly:

When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy hands,
The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained,
What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that Thou didst visit him?

Always for the old men He was a figure of might, of power, so terrible as to be veiled. To suit them He must always sit on his throne of jewels blue as crocuses. But to Saul there was a sense of Him abroad, with the new moon, with the coming of springtime. And, most of all, He was to be found on the sea. Before heaven and earth existed, there were vast shadowy waters. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The old men, huddling in temples, had forgotten the waters where His

spirit yet moved. On the face of the waters was always a light, a beauty, or a somber power, that raised a song in Saul's heart, a song so highly pitched, so strange, that there was neither music nor words to it. Old Hebrew poets had imagined a song of worship in the stars, adoring their maker; and mystics of his people, in quiet and asceticism, had sought to write this feeling, and, finding the rich Hebrew tongue inadequate, had suggested an occult arrangement of numbers, to be understood only by initiates. But the face of the waters was sufficient for Saul. "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

All that was of the sea was kin to Saul. The cool sea, the cool, swift-moving sea. Whether it was crescent waves marking the yellow sand with silver foam, or huge green bodies crashing against the cliffs with fury, whether heaving purple masses flecked with white like asphodel, or a green floor like a green meadow. The gulls hovering on slight wings, uttering their slight sea-cry, the dumb, amber-flecked, tumbling dolphins; the distant whales. Better than the riot of summer on land was the restrained beauty of the sea. Better than tuberoses and violets and Syrian pinks was the crystal air. Better than honey was the salt taste of it. Better than violins the slap of wave against bow, the hiss and foam of the wake, the never-ceasing murmur of the sea. The discords of sea-birds were better than lutes. Better the slate and pebbles and seaweed of the harsh shore than the swards of all Cilicia. The tempest that wrought such havoc on

the shore, whose fangs rived the live-oak, was powerless against the sea. On the waters the rising moon cast a reflection like a knife-blade, clean, pointed like a knife. All the sea was clean, powerful as a heavy whetted knife.

All that had to do with a ship was kin to him from bow to counter. The sweet shape of ships, shaped gently as harps, the rake of the masts, the sails of Egyptian cloth, blue-white as snow; the cold clear white of pine oars; the firm hempen ropes, the smell of pitch. Running free the sails were like the outspread wings of swans; on the wind or close-hauled they were like delicately adjusted pointers of sun-dials. All the men of the sea were kin to him, the men toiling at the oars in calm weather, grunting as they each put their back into the stroke, the sailors nimble as monkeys, the helmsman's vast African bulk as he strained on the steering-oar, the sturdy officer aft, the lookout at the prow, with the salt in his eyes, with the sun beating on his bronze neck, watching for rocks, and for weeds that might tangle the sweeps, lifting either arm, "To right; to left!" seeing the strange monsters in the sea-depths—the half-blinded, the utterly weary lookout . . .

Some wild masculine strain out of a thousand years back made him dissatisfied with the security of cities. Old fathers who had followed Abraham, the friend of God, through the sand and snow of the Lebanon, fearless men who had crossed the burning desert after Joseph into Egypt, more fearless men who had fled Egypt, calling on the God

who is One to help them against the thousand and one gods of Pharaoh. . . . Yea, out of time's infancy in his veins clamored the blood of the great commodore, who embarked fearlessly, when all the world was tempest. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth. . . . Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. . . . They were all fearless; the desert and the seaboard was their home. All their blood in Saul revolted against crowded narrow streets; and their God was a God of desert and mountain, not of narrow crooked streets. It was the narrow, crooked streets, thought Saul, that put a haze of grime between the eyes of men and the majesty that had thundered on Sinai.

And Saul said to himself: "I will have nothing to do with narrow, crooked streets, neither to barter nor to study in them. I will take the sea as my workshop and my dwelling-place."

§ 2

"Uncle Joachim, haven't you got a great deal of influence with the proconsul?"

"Well, my dear, he is a friend of mine, just like a brother. He's a Roman; I'm a Jew. He's a patrician; I'm a merchant. But if he's in any fix, does he say, send for Cassius, send for Aurelius? No, it's, 'Where is that scoundrel, Joachim bar Ezra, my good friend?' My dear"—he took two gold coins from his pouch, held them together between

thumb and finger—"that's me and the proconsul!"

"Do you think you could get him to do me a favor?"

"Well," said Uncle Joachim huskily, "there's favors and favors, ain't it? What's the favor?"

"I want to be an officer of the navy."

"God of Israel! Are you mad?"

"No," said Saul, "no, Uncle Joachim, I'm not mad. My father wants me to go to Jerusalem and study. I don't want to go. To argue about how many angels can stand on the point of a needle—to me it's a waste of time."

"Well, be a merchant then, like me."

"I know, Uncle Joachim, you are wonderful. But I want to be free. Uncle Joachim, did you ever want to be free?"

"Did I want to be free? My dear, didn't I go up the Nile when I was your age, and a few years later went down the Red Sea. And then to Carthage! And Massilia! God of Israel! Didn't I suffer! And didn't I enjoy myself! Do I want to be free now? But, my dear, you are not free in the navy. Look-at, they can send you up to Britain, or down south to the end of the world, where the boat slides off. And you fight. You fight for people who aren't your own people. You eat food, *fui!* that a Jew can't touch. And even if you last," said Uncle Joachim, "what will you get? Thank you! Glad to have had you! My darling, win twenty sea-fights, capture cities, the Romans will always put a Roman over you. They like Jews, yes! They admire Jews. Fine! But show me a Jewish proprætor, a Jewish gov-

ernor. My dear, I tell you what I will do. I will have you made an officer in the Quartermaster's Department. There, that's what your Uncle Joachim will do for you. You never thought your Uncle Joachim would do that for you!"

"I want to go to sea."

"Look-at!" said Uncle Joachim. He became secretive. "How do you know these Romans will last? How do you know we won't be big as the Romans ourselves one of these days? Look. We got the money. We got the men. One good campaign, and Asia is ours. How far from Jerusalem to Egypt? We need a leader, yes. Oh, no, not Herod Antipas! *Fui*, how I hate that man! Oh, my dear, a big fat woman! But— My boy, one morning you wake up, and your admiral says: 'To-day we fight the Jews. *Senatus populusque Romanus contra Hebraos!*' How would you feel? What would you say?"

"I'll risk that."

"Funnier things have happened, Saul, my dear. Funnier things. You never know."

"When that day comes, Uncle Joachim, when your Jesus of Nazareth conquers the world for the Jews," Saul smiled, "he will need an admiral, and I'll be there."

"You rascal! Look-at, my boy, you do what your father says. You go and study. With your brains, with your father's money, and with a little help from your poor old Uncle Joachim, and a nice clever little wife, you could be a member of the Sanhedrim before you are thirty-five. Think, my dear!"

"I don't want to be a member of the Sanhedrim. I want to be myself, Saul."

"My boy," said Uncle Joachim. "I have done my best. You won't be stopped. I shall now see my good friend the proconsul. But what will your father say? And your dear mother? O God of Israel! And your sister, *fui!* Oh, my dear, what I shall have to suffer!"

§ 3

With the three men who were to examine him Saul felt friends at once. The one was a tall thin man, with the face of an ascetic Greek priest. He looked as if he were more at home in the cloisters of a university than on a ship of war, yet Saul knew him for the leader who had gone as far north as Thule, a region of ice and white sea-birds and the vast polar bear, and had discovered what none had before believed, that there were folk in that lonely land. The second was a burly, cheery man, with the left sleeve of his tunic pinned across his breast. The third was bearded and quiet and grave.

"So you want to go to sea," said the explorer, and he smiled. "Why?"

"I feel more at home there, sir, than on land. Something draws me to the sea."

"Have you ever been to sea?"

"Just on voyages with my father to Cyprus and Attalia and Cæsarea."

"The sea is much bigger than the Mediterranean, my boy."

"Oh, I know that, sir!"

"Do you? Let's see how much you know. What and where is Taprabane?"

"A large island, sir, on the high seas opposite India."

"What are the limits of the earth?"

"On the south, sir, the Cinnamon country. On the north, Thule, where you have been. West, Britain. East, the mountains of India."

"How far is it from Rhodes to Byzantium?"

"Four thousand nine hundred stadia, sir."

"From Rhodes to the southern limits of the earth?"

"Sixteen thousand six hundred stadia, sir."

"Good. Now for a hard one. Where is Hieraconnesos?"

"In the Arabian gulf, sir. It is the island of the hawks. It is one of three islands; the other two are the island of the Tortoises and the island of the Seals."

"My boy, how do you know all this?"

"I take a great interest in the sea, sir, and in things connected with the sea."

"Know anything about boats?" asked the one-armed man.

"All I could pick up from the sailors. Also I can handle a small boat."

"What's a tingle?"

"A patch put on the outside of a stove-plank, sir."

"What's a lee tide?"

"A tide running in the same direction as the wind blows, sir."

"Now, my boy, what do seamen pin their faith to in making a voyage?"

"Lead, latitude, and lookout, sir."

"What's the proper way of coiling a rope?"

"With the sun, sir."

"He'll make a seaman," said the one-armed officer, and Saul flushed with pleasure. "I'll have him, brother," the one-armed man told the explorer.

"He couldn't be with a better man, brother," said the ascetic-looking man.

But the bearded man was looking keenly at Saul.

"Tell me, my lad, are you strong?"

"Quite strong, sir. There's no weight I can't lift, or hardship I can't stand except—"

"Except what, my boy?"

"Except, sir, I've fainted now and again. But those were only growing weaknesses. I've not done so for a long time."

"Feel oppressed and sort of tumble over?"

"Just like that, sir."

"Tell me, my boy, after fainting do you feel better, or worse?"

"Oh, much better, sir! All the oppression gone."

"Your eyes, do they ever bother you?"

"Yes, sir, they have done so. A little. But that's only from reading, study. They would be all right once I got to sea."

The ascetic man looked troubled. The one-armed gruff man shifted and cleared his throat. "Humph!" he muttered, "ho! humph!" But the bearded man said nothing for a minute.

"Thanks for letting us see you," said the explorer.

"But am I going to sea, sir?"

"We'll let you know, just as soon as possible. Quite soon," he promised. . . .

It was late that evening when Uncle Joachim came in, very hearty, rather embarrassed.

"My dear," he told Saul, and he held both his hands, "if you had only heard what Gaius Julian, the geographer, and the captain of Syracuse said about you. Gaius said: 'Bar Ezra, what a head that boy has! If he had the health like he has the head, he would be the greatest geographer in the world.' That from Gaius. My dear, did you understand? from Gaius! And the captain of Syracuse said: 'I wager that lad can handle a boat with any man. If he had the health—' "

"So I'm not to go," said Saul listlessly.

"My dear, it's just health. Who can help health? Look-at, they love you, but—my dear, they'd be afraid. On board ship, in a storm, or a battle—Don't look so sad!" implored Uncle Joachim. "God of Israel! You look as if you were going into prison for life!"

"Well, amn't I?" said Saul.

CHAPTER V

§ I

HE thought to himself smilingly as he walked in the sunset around Jerusalem, with the broad phylacteries bound on his forehead and about his arms, that but eighteen months before he had been like a child. In Tarsus he had only been a young Jew, an object of curiosity to the Greek youth, an object of fear, a little, to the effeminate Syrians, for the names of the Maccabees sounded yet like a trumpet over Asia. There, though in his native city, he was like a foreigner in a strange land. Here, though born abroad, he was at home. The sun topped the blue hills of Moab to gold, and a last shaft of it fell on the white temple.

Beautiful for situation is Mount Zion,
The joy of the whole earth;
On the north side is the city of the great King.

Below him rose the Temple, court on court, and from where he stood he could see the small square building roofed with gold, which housed the most awful of mysteries. All about him was Jerusalem. He quoted to himself:

Walk about Zion, go round about her,
Count the towers and mark the walls;
Consider the palaces, and tell it to your children.
For the Lord is our God for ever and ever.

All about him, now the sun was going down, the life of Jerusalem milled. Here they went by, Pharisee with broad phylacteries, and Sadducee with grim face, occasionally a sly Samaritan, or a thin, half-starved brother from an Essene convent; Arab sheikhs from the desert, with their mantles of broad stripes and clumsy red shoes; a Roman soldier, hairy, contemptuous of the whole city and its people; women—girls that were like slight flowers, and young women that were like flowers in full bloom, and now and then an old woman, with all the coarseness of life gone from her face. Occasionally Saul could hear a whisper as himself was pointed out. "There is a pupil of Gamaliel's; see how broad his phylacteries are!" "There is a relative of Joachim bar Ezra's, Antipas' friend. His name is Saul. From Tarsus—an unclean Greek." Occasionally a passing Roman official would salute him, and as Saul would return the salute he could hear a muttering. And he would ask the blessing of some old teacher, and the passers-by would gape with awe. It was good to be in Jerusalem, of Jerusalem.

Not ancient Tarsus even had the glory of this city of his spirit. There was the palace great Herod had builded, its two graceful flying wings, formal with turrets, a-flutter with doves; its courtyard with oblong tiles, red, yellow, and blue. There was Mark Antony's bronze tower overlooking the Temple, a

threat and an insult. Here, there, everywhere, ran the little streets, the sooks of the merchants, heavy with traffic, lit with cressets, so dark they were, so cool. And Kedron rippled onward through Herod's garden; beloved Kedron, better than Cydnus, better than Abana and Pharpar, the little rivers the Damascenes loved. From the Mount of Olives one could see the Sea that was called Dead, like a stretch of silk; the white ribbon of the Jordan, fruitful with bream; silver and green of olives, bronze of palms. About the city were tents and booths, grazing camels and fat sheep. Excellent with riches was Jerusalem, the city of the Lord. And there was the Temple, the center of the world, where one day he would teach. There the wide steps, there the colored pillars, there the barefoot congregation. There the money-changers sat with their piles of coins before them, money of Babylon, of Egypt, of Syria, Greek coins, coins of Gaul. There the noisy butchers, there the bird-sellers with their willow cages. Their voices were raised in shrill buying and selling, but deep in their hearts was a psalm or song:

I was glad when they said, Let us go up to God's house.
My soul longs and faints for the Temple courts:
My heart sings for joy to the living God.
The sparrow hath found a house, the swallow a nest
Where she may rear her young by Thy altars, O God!
They are blessed who live there: they ever praise Thee.
I would rather keep a door in the Temple of God,
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Here, to and fro, went the soft-voiced priests,
with their white robes and blue-horned bonnets.

Here sat the rabbis with their pupils about them, while pilgrims stood by, putting the words in their scrip of memories to carry back to Greece or Egypt. And passing the first court one came to a low wall of chiseled marble with openings in it, with small pillars on each side, on which were inscribed words more threatening, more arrogant than the Roman tower without. "Past this no foreigner goes, on pain of death." Written in Greek and Roman it was arrogant. . . . Passing this, one came to the gate called the Beautiful, of hammered brass of Corinth. And past this still rose the gate of Nicanor, the gate of silver and gold. Pillars of marble, twisted pillars of alabaster, a column of smoke, and there lay the great altar. Out of a floor of marble and chalcidony, of great blocks of alabaster and silver and gold tiles, it rose, gray frothing, masculine, like some immense bearded wave. It shamed the bright shawls and delicate rugs with its harsh virility. The great bath like a flower, resting on twelve lions of brass, so large that it was called a sea, the marble tables, the gold and silver sacrificial bowls, were like a child's baubles beside this gray monstrous rock, untouched of hammer and chisel, that was as the earth when the waters under the heaven were gathered together into one place, and the dry land appeared, gray, forbidding, elemental; before it was said: Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind. Terrifying it was as when the evening and the morning were the third day. . . .

But more terrifying still, terrifying as the tops of

high mountains, as loneliness on the tops of high mountains—the shining holy place, great stones covered with gold, thick leaf of hammered gold, white pillars holding up a roof of gold, door of gold covered with curtain of blue and scarlet, of purple and white, concealing the secret things of God. Into that Holy Place only the High Priest might enter in a vast blue garment trimmed with tinkling golden bells, with his breastplate of ruby and topaz, carbuncle and emerald, sapphire, and diamond like clear water; jacinth yellow as honey; red agate and purple amethyst; chalcedony blue-green as evening, onyx black as night, and jasper like a rose. On his frail old body they bound the breastplate, and placed the heavy cloak belled with gold. And in the High Priest's eyes was a terror past telling, and through all the Temple was a silence broken only by the tinkle of the small golden bells, that told he was still alive in that dread retiring place. And when he came out, he was white and cold, for all his heavy garments, and silent, so that one did not know for a time had he been smitten dumb in that awful place, where only the High Priest could go. . . . For there dwelt the Living God, whose Name only the High Priest could utter.

Colder, more fearful than the tops of desolate mountains, under a dark moon or under the edged sickle of a new moon, was that secret place. . . . Death was warm and comforting beside the secrets of that golden place. . . .

So that it was a relief to get back to Gamaliel's

class in the courtyard and listen to the old man expound dogma and ritual. Gamaliel was not old, but, to the youth of the students, so deep was his knowledge that he seemed a very ancient. He was a short, squat man with an iron-gray beard beautifully trimmed, with robes spotlessly white. Under his blue-fringed shawl his gray eyes were clear as well-water. His brown muscular hands were scrubbed until red showed on top of the brown, yet there were faint pencilings of brown grime in the wrinkles, faint as the veins of a green leaf. All day, when not lecturing, he worked among his olive-trees and bees in Bethlehem, until in Jerusalem it was believed that out of the slow, firm growth of the olive-tree he extracted fixity of thought; from the straight, swift flight of the bee he learned to go directly to the heart of a problem. Every morning except Sabbath morning he rode in from Bethlehem on his brown ass, and went to the courtyard where he conducted his classes. Around him in a ring his pupils sat, the cream of young Jewish learning of the strict Pharisee sect. Here were Jews of Egypt, subtle Alexandrians, who came that the seal of Temple learning should be set on them; here Phrygian Jews, timid as hares, all but infidels; here some from the Euphrates, so poor that they were starving; here the sons of great merchants from Greece; here lean-faced, hot-eyed boys dreaming of Judas Maccabæus, and ready to teach fanaticism; here a drowsy Essene from Kyrioth with his mind fixed upon the intricacies of the Law, caring nothing for

the world about him. On his left hand was Saul, his cleverest student. On his right was Onkelos, the beloved student.

"Remember," Gamaliel would drive home the arch-stone of unity, "there are thirteen divine attributes; there are twelve tribes; there are eleven stars, as described in Joseph's dream; there are ten commandments; there are nine months preceding childbirth; there are eight days preceding circumcision; there are seven days in the week; there are six books of Mishnah, as thus: Zeraim, Moed, Nashim, Nezikin, Kodashim, Tohorot; there are five books of Moses; there are four matrons, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; there are three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; there are two tables of the Law; but One is our God who is over heaven and earth. Who knoweth thirteen?"

"I, saith Israel, know thirteen," chanted the students, and they repeated his lesson.

"Who knoweth aught of the night?" asked Gamaliel.

"I, saith Israel, know this of the night," answered the students.

"It was at the beginning of the first watch of the night,

"When He did cause Abraham, the righteous convert, to be victorious through the division of his band at night;

"He did threaten Abimelech, the king of Gerar, in a dream of the night;

"He did terrify Laban, the Syrian, on the eve of his meeting with Jacob—in the night;

"And Israel wrestled with the angel and prevailed against Him in the night;

"The first-born of the progeny of Patros He did smite at moon of the night;

"Their vigorous youth they found not, when they arose in the night;

"The host of the prince of Haroseth He did trample down through the agency of the stars of the night;

"When the blaspheming Sennacherib purposed to assail His habitation, He did frustrate him through the dead carcasses of his host, at night;

"Bel and his image were hurled down in the darkness of the night;

"To Daniel, the much beloved man, was the mysterious vision revealed in the night;

"Belshazzar, who made himself drunken out of the holy vessels, was slain on the same night;

"Daniel, who was saved from the lions' den, interpreted the terrifying dreams of the night;

"Haman the Agagite, who cherished enmity, wrote his letters to exterminate the Jews, at night—"

Into the Temple courts, above the chant of the students and the chatter of the buyers and sellers, came the tramp of the Roman soldiers as they changed guard at the Antonia Tower, thump of heavy feet on paved street, thump as of drums, the

thrap of scabbard against naked, powerful thigh; the officer's hoarse shout.

"He did awaken against him His all-conquering power by disturbing the sleep of the king, at night."

The students dropped their voices a little:

"He will tread the wine-press for them who anxiously ask: Watchman, what of the night?"

Shuffle of feet and crisp order; rattle of buckler; swish of swords as they come to the salute . . . A wild young student sprang up, his eyes gleaming, his arms outstretched, his loud voice half sob, half wild desert cry:

"Let the Eternal, the Watchman of Israel, cry out and say, The morning hath come as well as the night.

"Appoint watchmen to Thy city, all day and all night.

"Illumine, as with the light of day, the darkness of our night."

But clear, crisp against the student's wail, came the ensign's command:

"Platoon, 'tion! Right face! Fo'rd—march!"

§ 2

At Tarsus the feeling of his family against the Romans had seemed to him only a little humorous, rather pathetic, a fragment of old nationalism gone forever. His father was a legal Roman, and he himself a Roman citizen, and to him the great Empire was a thing that would last forever. The standards

that had crossed the Alps had seen the victory over the cunning, treacherous Gauls, the subjugation of the stupid, heavy-thewed Britons in their misty fens, had waved before deleted Carthage! were not these invincible? And were not the Romans wise? Did any sect wish to worship after their tradition, the Romans gave them leave. Now and then their taxation was heavy, as in Judea, but, after all, Saul knew, but for the Roman eagles, Jerusalem, the first city in the world, the richest and most magnificent except perhaps Antioch and Rome, would be at the mercy of every desert wastrel and pirate in Asia. Against Jerusalem the Samaritans seethed with a hatred that was madness. But only a year ago, the Samaritans had smuggled dead men's bones into the Temple, and scattered them in the courts, defiling the very house of the Living God, and but for the Romans the Kedron would have run blood instead of water. Among the Pharisees there were wild spirits, "zealous for the law," whose sleeves covered knives the Sadducean priesthood would have known but for the Roman patrols. Also northward, always threatening Galilee, was Aretas, king of Arabia, whose daughter Herod Antipas had married and put away for Herodias; and but for the Romans, Tiberias and Cæsarea, those rising cities of Herod's building, would have been at the mercy of the Arab hordes; and once in Galilee, with the Temple treasures at their mercy, would the Arab cavalry have stopped? No, the answer was. The tribute money was well spent, Saul, the Jew of Tarsus, knew. No measure the Romans proposed but had its huge per-

centage of good for the people. Annius Rufus, the vast North Italian, who was governor now in Herod's palace, had suggested that a new waterway should be made into the city instead of the old and broken one, and rather than have a new impost on the people had suggested confiscating some of the money in the treasury of the Temple. The outcry of the priests was furious. But the priests were wrong, Saul knew. The Romans were right. All that was Roman, and that did not come into conflict with the Law, Saul thought good. . . .

There came a great hurt to him on this account. He made peace with his father, and came to Jerusalem to study, as his father had wished, and his strange Persian mother had seemed satisfied too, but his sister Enid had only looked upon it with suspicion. Nothing he could do would satisfy that strange, dark-hearted girl. Always into his every action she read some blunt or subtle attack on Judaism, and now in his absence, practically unknown to him, she had got married. Married, too, much against her father's wishes, who had looked for a good match for her. Married some one, too, as mad as she was, for they had both sneered at the Tarsan riches. Her husband was an under-steward of a rich man of Arimathea, Joseph by name, who had lately bought many vineyards to the north of Jerusalem. Nithai, Enid's husband, was a son of Sadoc the Pharisee, who, with Judas of Gamala, had led the revolt against Capronius, and had died sword in hand against the Romans, and was a relative of Banus, who had retired into the wilderness to com-

mune with God. When Saul heard of her marriage his heart swelled with emotion, and when he heard they were to live in Jerusalem, his joy knew no bounds. Sadoc was revered as a great patriot, and Banus was accepted almost as a prophet. Saul felt he would have a brother in the young Pharisee. And Enid would be changed, now she was no longer a maid, and draw close to him because he was her brother, and together they would remember Tarsus, the golden city of their youth. . . . Saul looked forward to spending the Sabbath with them, when the Sabbath lamp shed its golden luster over snowy linen and blue flowers and yellow wine, and from the roof of the Temple the silver trumpets spoke. But when he visited them they were courteous and cold.

He felt stupid, and felt he looked stupid, before the frigid politeness of the pair. He had come to them with a harvest blooming in his heart, and out of them a cold wind had blown so that the flowers in his hand and the flowers in his heart had withered. And the porters who had brought his presents looked curiously at him, as if they were sorry for him. . . . He could not understand. And he would not ask what was wrong, for he knew they would only say, smiling: "Is anything wrong? Surely nothing is wrong."

Their smiles would have been like armor, shining, hard, like Roman armor, like armor of brass. When he asked his sister of news of home, of his father and mother, she answered him freely, coldly, as though he had a right to know that, and no more,

and she would tell him that, and no more. And he made mention of the feast of Sargon.

"I suppose they had a wonderful time this year," he laughed.

"I know nothing of that," Enid said primly. "I am a Jewess." And Saul smiled wryly. Oh, there spoke the old bitter sister!

His brother-in-law, Nithai, was a thin, lean young man, with a great look of race about his features. One felt there was tremendous power concealed in him. One could see in him the son of Sadoc, of the harsh old rebel who fell ringed with Roman dead. And beside that there was a look of grace to him, of gentleness, that came to him from his mother, Saul thought with a twinge of envy, remembering the Persian woman in his father's house, shining and hard as diamonds, secret as hidden diamonds, his Persian mother. Saul spoke of Nithai's father, Sadoc, with reverence, and of Banus, the quietist in the wilderness, and Nithai answered him, with a polite, rigid smile, "Yes, indeed," as though replying to some inquisitive stranger, while Enid stood by with a darkness in her face. And Saul said to himself, "I shall not come again."

When he was going Enid spoke, looking at the broad phylactery on his brow, and on his hand, woven to his middle finger. Her voice was soft, and for an instant Saul thought she was going to relent and be friends.

"Are you happy as a student in the Temple, Saul?"

"Yes, Enid," he told her.

"But not so happy as you would have been on a Roman vessel of war." And her voice was sharp as a weapon. Saul went wearily away. Going home in the dusk past the tents and fires of the Arabs, past the picketed camels, with their tinkling bells, he wondered to himself where was the fault in him that he could not command love. He could have been happy with Enid and her husband, but they would not have him, and it could not have been this respect of his for Rome, this quality of being an "Asian Roman" as the Jewish nationalists would call him, for his father, who was a Roman citizen, was loved, and his Uncle Joachim, who was little better than a Gentile, was loved. Gamaliel, whom Saul loved and revered, gave him respect and kindness, but hardly love. Onkelos, his fellow-student, the Damascene with the brown, dreaming eyes, was Gamaliel's favorite pupil, and at his mistakes Gamaliel only smiled. Saul would have given anything for Onkelos' warm friendship, but except for ordinary comradeship, he could get no point of contact with the brown-eyed poet. And occasionally Gamaliel got impatient at Saul's cleverness.

Saul remembered with dismay a scene at Gamaliel's lectures two mornings before. Gamaliel was lecturing on the ceremonial uncleanliness of creeping things, while around the class a group of priests and pilgrims were listening. And when it came to Saul's turn to speak, as was the custom of the class, he began to give reasons showing that creeping things were clean according to Mosaic law, giving reason after reason, until the priests smiled at his

ingenuity, and the pilgrims were awed by his erudition. But there was disgust in Gamaliel's honest eyes, and Onkelos cried to him in horror:

"Saul, Saul, do you mock the Law?"

"Hush, little one," Gamaliel told the beloved pupil, "he only mocks his own learning."

Saul knew why Gamaliel was angry. Gamaliel despised nothing more than a display of erudition for applause. Saul wanted to say out aloud, "Rabban, I am sorry!" as Onkelos, he felt, would have done. But the words would not come to him. Afterward he spoke to Gamaliel.

"Master, wherein was I wrong?"

"There is such a thing as being too advanced in Judaism, Saul," the great rabbi answered dryly.

Out here, to-night, in the darkness, lit only by the stars and the cameleers' fires, he felt himself bitterly alone. Something, some hardness in him that came with him from his mother's womb, from his hard Persian mother's womb, made him admirable, but unloved. The piping and singing of the shepherds and camel-drivers came to him, and a sudden discovery of himself that he never sang or played any instrument, nor was ever consciously joyous. The unclean, unlettered camelman, he thought, had more in life, more love, than he, the admired young rabbi, the cleverest of the class of Gamaliel.

§ 3

Uncle Joachim had come up to Jerusalem, gorgeous as June. He had been transacting some busi-

ness with the emir of Tadmor, and he was now in the capital city, what ends of his own concealed behind that bland child's face none knew. His striped cloak was like the cloak of a king, and his vest was of blue silk. There was a touch of alkanet on his cheeks, and his hair was powdered blue. The great emerald on his hand shone dully as a ship's lamp.

For everybody in Jerusalem of importance he had a present, it seemed. Small emeralds from the Djebel Zabur, little topazes, small seed-pearls; for the Greek wife of the Roman governor he had brought a little Syrian bear, with silver fur and a child's sweet face, and for the governor a dromedary white as milk that could outrace the fleetest horse. He had it of a sheikh of the mountains beyond Tadmor. For Gamaliel he had the small ivory and silver manikins and gold squared board of the Persian game. To Onkelos he gave a lemur on a chain of supple Damascene silver. In Tarsus Uncle Joachim was wonderful, but in Jerusalem he was magnificent. Folk murmured at the richness of his gifts.

"It is nothing," Uncle Joachim would say in his husky voice. "I am lucky, and I like it to share my luck. Take it, look-at, or I slap your face." To hear him speak like that to Erinna, the governor's wife, with her clear-cut patrician's face, was to tremble. But Erinna laughed her low, cultured laughter. It was impossible to be angry with Uncle Joachim.

To the governor and the governor's wife, he was a rich, vulgar, good-hearted fellow. To Gamaliel he was a shrewd observer of the world. Gamaliel was

eager to hear from his lips of his last trip to Babylon, where Uncle Joachim had met and talked to priests of the Buddha. It was a different Gamaliel and a different Joachim from those Saul knew who spoke together. Gamaliel had lost his concise surety, and Uncle Joachim was a figure of mental power. They spoke dreamily, as men on the borders of sleep.

"Did the Buddha tell of a heaven, Joachim?"

"He seems to have known of no heaven. . . . Rabbin Gamaliel, is there a heaven?"

It was a while before Gamaliel answered: "God knoweth, blessed be He!"

To another party Uncle Joachim was the all-powerful politician, the man whom Herod Antipas trusted, the friend of the Asiatic proconsuls, and of the effeminate, diabolically clever emir of Tadmor. For all his ceremonial impurity, the chazzans, the priests and Levites, were respectful to him, for when it came to choosing the high priest of the year, Uncle Joachim's word would go a long way with the Romans. With the Romans Uncle Joachim was garrulous, with Gamaliel serious; with the priests he was silent as the tomb. To Saul the priests were immensely friendly, knowing the love Joachim bore to Saul's father and to the student's self. The one for whom Uncle Joachim had most respect and a grudging admiration and no liking at all was Caiaphas.

Caiaphas was a lean, silent, powerful man, with his passions curbed like the mouth of a horse. Bitter and hawk-faced, the other priests seemed afraid of him. There was no personal charm about him, but

race was written all over him, his high cheek-bones, his quivering nostrils, his shapely hands in their silken gloves. To him the other priests were pawns to be moved as in the Persian game, and on the Romans he looked with contempt as on barbarians. The Roman governor was to him a loathly stranger in the gate. He was cold and silently contemptuous of the garrison. Never did he argue, never did he encourage brawling. Cold and silent and alone and terrible he moved through the Temple, respected by the Romans because he was incorruptible, feared by his own. Other priests the people loved, but Caiaphas they acknowledged to be most worthy, so dignified, so intensely national, such a Jew was he, such a Jew great in defeat.

His wife was dead, perhaps luckily enough for her, but the burning spirit of Caiaphas, concealed under the ice of his appearance, flamed in his daughter. She was a flaming apparition. She was small, lithe, precious; all the flame of her father was in her hair, that was darker than orange, light color of flame. Her darkened eyes were of flame. There was nothing cool, aloof, Greek, about her. She was Oriental, seemingly most passionate. All the grace of flowers was about her. Her hands in her lap were like flowers, white flowers. They were quiet as flowers. And when they moved it was with the slow grace of flowers moved by the wind. Her name was Anna.

Flame-colored, flower-graceful, Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas, would seem to a young boy like some princess out of a nurse's tale. A man would

see how hard her mouth was, how thin the nostrils; that the darkened eyes gave back only a reflection as from the darkened surface of a mirror. Her voice she had pitched low because in its normal tones it was strident. Her ascetic-looking father teemed with passion. If bee or butterfly should light on the golden roof of God, the desecration would choke Caiaphas, and he would rage that he had not wings to rise in mid-air and punish it. He was an aloof, august man, but there were depths to him, dark depths as of some cranny in the wilderness. But in Anna, daughter of Caiaphas, passion there was none. She was cold as a serpent. Beautiful and treacherous as shoal water. Her bosom was hollow, filled with cold, dank wind. She had nothing but beauty.

Everything Roman she detested, having no possession of the Romans in her being, no gallantry of action or thought. The Romans of her class considered duty, gallantry, honor, as abstractions of the Platonists, but pursued them as though they were material facts, and that she could not understand. The Greeks believed that not to be born was better, and yet believing this had such courage that they could enjoy life, Diogenes telling Alexander to stand out of his sun, and Phidias reproducing beauty in marble statue and golden bee. Everything Greek she hated, everything pagan. Their grace, their joy of life was not in her.

Everything Hebrew she protected with a fierce possessive protection, because it was hers. Not because she loved it, but because she was of it. All

Palestine seemed to her to be a contest between Roman and Jew. In this, and for this, she took a fierce interest. Women and men of the Jews had become Romanized. Herod Antipas was Roman of the Romans; so was his wife Herodias—did they not eat roasted boar? She took pride that when she walked abroad people said, "There walks Anna, daughter of Caiaphas, a Jewess of the Jews!" Abroad she was beautiful; nothing touched her dignity. She was a fitting daughter of Priest Caiaphas.

When Uncle Joachim presented Saul, he presented him as "nearly a Roman, eh, my dear; none of your zealots!" And Anna had given the boy a long, shrewd look. Into Saul's eyes had come the note of wonder and admiration. Anna had smiled. Here was a boy the Romans should not have.

"A student of Gamaliel, his cleverest student," Uncle Joachim had announced. "He's none of your tumbling Pharisees, or bleeding Pharisees, Anna, but for all that a good boy."

And he gave him a look of affection. "Tumbling Pharisees" was the townsman's phrase for those followers of the Law who went about bent double in prayer and reflection, and "bleeding Pharisees" for those who went about with their eyes closed lest the sight of a woman should make them impure, and as often as not came up short against a door or wall with disastrous effect to their faces.

"I am sure he is not a Roman," said Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas, in her low, artificial voice.

Saul could hardly find words to greet her with, for all his cleverness in Gamaliel's school, for all

his metropolitanism in Tarsus. It seemed to him that all his life he had been waiting to see a woman like this. A woman Solomon might have sung. Rose of Sharon and lily of the valleys, and her sandaled feet, how beautiful! And about her none of that lax beauty that was like a green morass. Helmeted and virginal. She was cool as cool water, quiet as flowers, and, like the sun, glowing, glowing like the sun on terebinth and orange tree.

Joachim was rich as Joseph of Arimathea, rich as Nikodemos; and perhaps the wealth of Joachim would go to this slim, gray-eyed boy. Rich in his own family, too, Anna thought. She had no ambition of marriage, concretely, but that here was one who must be saved from the Romans.

"Are you happy in Jerusalem?" she asked him.

"I am happy now," said Saul.

"Have you any kinspeople in Jerusalem?"

"I have a sister, Enid—" he told her, and went on telling her of how they had not been cordial to him, and how his sister hated him for what she thought his Roman leanings.

"But you are not a Roman. You are a Hebrew of the Hebrews. You must let me be a—a sister to you," she said prettily.

"I have a great longing in my heart for a sister," said Saul. And Anna blushed.

"Your friends, your comrades—"

"There is Onkelos, but Onkelos—" and he told of the young poet's attachment to Gamaliel, of how he could not get into the brown-eyed Damascene's heart. Very simply, as if these matters one discussed

just as the weather, he told of his loneliness. His eyes never left her face. And slightly, as much as it could, her tightly bound heart went out to him. She was thankful for the look of wonder in his eyes. And she said to herself: "This young, ascetic boy, he will not ask for love, for affection, as a coarse man would ask for affection. All he asks is to be allowed to love somebody." "If a Roman lady—" she thought. "They shan't have him," she decided.

"When you are lonely," she said, "you must come here and talk to us, to my father, and to me. I am lonely too," she said. "The other girls have their hearts full of marriages and silken coats and shoes of bright green leather, but I am the daughter of Caiaphas, and something of his eagle's ways have descended to me."

"As it were the company of two armies!" thought Saul.

"She is lovely!" said Saul to Joachim, as they went to Bethany in the cool of the evening.

"Who, Anna? Yes, she was lovely. In a way, yes," but looking at Saul Uncle Joachim saw the boy's face glow, and forbore to teach him wisdom about women. "When I was young, I, too, was romantic," the old scoundrel thought, with tears near his eyes. "I can remember," and he tried his best to remember his first love, but he couldn't. Was it Rebecca, the daughter of Rafael? Or Sephorah, the Arabian girl? Which? Or perhaps it was the little one with the pinched face and brown eyes, whose name he had forgotten. Let the boy

dream out his dream. They came too rarely, and they went too soon. And lest he should be questioned about Anna, and not put fervor into his answers, he changed the subject.

"When I was coming through Nazareth, my dear, I saw the young Jesus."

But Saul was thinking of Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas.

"I had it always in my mind to stop off at Nazareth and see the boy, and ask him a question or two. My dear, did you ever hear that the year he was *ben-hat-torah* the boy was lost in Jerusalem Passover time, and that they found him in the *Lishcath haggazzith* talking to Shammai? Shammai had cursed the lad for coming in with his head uncovered, but what he said to Shammai, or in what language, nobody knows. But it shut the great Shammai up like an oyster. Now," said Uncle Joachim, "I had a question or two of my own to ask—I asked Gamaliel, and he gave me no answer. But a young boy, a gifted young boy, is like a psalterion or sambuca. You touch the strings, and a music comes to you, from where you do not know."

"Does she play on the sambuca?" asked Saul.

Joachim was paying as little attention to Saul's words as Saul to his. They walked toward Bethany in the dying day. The hills of Moab turned from blue to purple. The blue of the afternoon became a soft green. The harsh green of the palm-trees became a black. The flower of the almond-trees turned to dim clouds. Westward, from the Bitter Sea, came a triangular flight of cranes. To-morrow they would

fish in the Nile. The wings of the cranes were tinged with rose-color.

"I had thought," said Joachim, "to ask him hard questions, as one might ask a young queen questions of the regimen of her kingdom, of practice and policy, men's questions; and then you find her a grave-eyed young woman, and the questions are dumb on your lips. My dear, he was just a young lad, adzing a plank in his father's workshop. He had a face sweet as a girl's, but a man's face, and eyes so clear that I felt dirty. 'Are you Jesus?' I asked. 'What do you wish of me?' he said. 'I'd like a drink of water.' My dear, I've talked to Tiberius, man to man. When Tiberius wanted to know the real truth about things in Asia, I told him, and it wasn't easy hearing. But when I saw that young man—just a boy, Saul, not two years older than you!—I said, 'I'd like a drink of water.' "

"Did he give it to you?"

"He gave it to me, and he walked with me to the end of the town. He just said nothing, just walked. Just as you and I are walking now. I turned to him suddenly, and I said, 'If you're ever in any trouble,' I said, 'I wish you'd let me help you.' I don't know why I said it. And he thought a minute, and smiled: 'It's good of you.' 'I mean it,' I said; 'old Joachim bar Ezra has influence, and if you need it—' 'I shall remember,' he said. And I felt all the time, my dear, as if it would be he would be doing me the favor in accepting it. He's good, my dear; you can feel it in the air where he is. And a gentleman. Poor, but such a great gentleman.

Ah, the seed of David, my boy! You feel he is a king, greater in feeling and dignity than Tiberius, or Aretas, or Herod of Galilee."

"Why doesn't he come up to Jerusalem, then," Saul asked, "and become a great man?"

"Some people become great men, and some just are, my dear," said Uncle Joachim. "It's a mystery."

"Is he clever, then?" Saul asked, a little angrily. "Can Shammai or Gamaliel teach him nothing? Is he as clever as Onkelos? Or is he as clever even as I?"

"Jesus isn't clever," laughed Uncle Joachim contemptuously.

§ 4

For the friendship of Onkelos and Gamaliel he cared nothing now. The coldness of Enid and Nithai was nothing to him. All the horizon of his days was bounded by the thought of the beauty of Anna, and of the horned bonnet of Caiaphas. When Anna went abroad, through the streets to Ophel, to Bethany, to the sook of the perfumers, to Kedron Bridge or toward Jordan, she allowed Saul to accompany her. She had almost a prim way about her, as a daughter of the Law should have, but it was a sort of heaven to be with her. Everywhere she was known, Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas; and because Caiaphas was fast becoming one of the greatest of the Sanhedrim, even the country oafs paid her reverence, and eyed Saul with wonder. The Roman officials coming in from their

hunting beyond the plains of Ghor, knowing she was of a great Jewish family, greeted her politely. Her own greeting was frigid. And Saul felt a new sense of nationality being born in him. To Roman officers, to whom a while before he would have spoken cordially, he was barely polite. All the wonders of their transport that he admired so much before, the companies of oxen, the elephants with huge painted ears, he now looked upon as an intrusion and a sacrilege. And Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas, was pleased with him.

Among the priests of the Temple he noticed a new respect for him. Each morning he went to the service of the opening of the Temple. Everywhere was chill of the dawn. From the towers came a note of warning:

"The morning already shines."

"Is the sky lit as far as Hebron?" came the ritual from the court.

"The whole sky is lit as far as Hebron."

The killing of the lamb; the blasts of the trumpeters; the loud gong; the chanting of the priests:

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.
Blessed be the God of Israel
For ever and ever!

Solemnly with flute and pipe, with harp, psaltery, and bells, the service went on. Peal of trumpet and throbbing of drum. And the service ended with a chant from the people and students:

Sing aloud to God our strength, and make a joyful noise,
Sing the psalm, strike the cymbals, harp, and psaltery.

Blow up the trumpet to the new moon.
It is a law for Israel, and a command of God.

Before now, as they scattered, the priests treated him with easy comradeship, as the student who would one day be one of themselves. But now there was respect in their greeting. "How is great Caiaphas?" they would ask. And hoping Saul would repeat it, they would add: "There is none for whom I have greater respect than for Caiaphas. There is none who is more worthy, no, not one." Even the students in the courtyard became a little servile. "There is one who will marry Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas, who will be high priest, mark my words. Saul will one day have places in his gift, offices. He will be a great officer of the Jews, Saul of Tarsus. How have you slept, Saul? Did you have a good awakening? Are you going to break your fast in the house of Caiaphas?" Only Onkelos and Gamaliel were silent, as though they did not know on what terms he was with one of the chief among the priests. But his sister Enid knew, Saul was sure, and would be furious. And Saul was not displeased with the thought.

Into both Anna's and his minds had come the thought of marriage, and to neither was it displeasing. To Anna he was a nice boy with money sufficient to make a career for himself great in Judaism, and he looked upon her so much as a goddess that it was pleasing. Also, she thought, he was a man who could be managed. With her knowledge of Temple diplomacy, there was no position to which he could

not aspire, and while he wore the trappings of power, it would be she, Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas, who would be the power all the time. Quietly, from under cover, she would watch and plan, strike and shift. . . . But it was time he should propose marriage to her, thought Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas.

She was one, thought Saul, not to be imagined about the petty details of a house. Her walk was a harmony, her face a silver shield, white sun on a white shield. There was about her something of a young boy, a comrade, Saul thought. Nothing of the short-legged, too female woman. A comrade and a star, and a princess all in one. When she was not there he would hold long conversations with her, conversations such as he thought he might have held with Onkelos had Onkelos been different. But when he was with her he was dumb, and herself was silent. He never asked her what her thoughts were, feeling they were too rare for utterance. . . . His mother would like her as a bride for him, Saul thought, but somehow he felt that his father and Uncle Joachim would choose some one different: his father and Uncle Joachim were men spoiled by the world; for them female women, for him the cool goddess with the flame of white lightning inside her, her hands like wood-violets; all her being fragrant as privet, cool as some god of the Greeks; eye of onyx, and burnished head. She was chaste as mountain rocks, chaste as sheet-lightning.

She was so perfect in mind and form to him that he feared to tell her that occasionally he fainted in

his rooms, and sometimes in the streets, and that at times the scrolls were hard reading to him, the Aramaic lettering blurring into unintelligible frieze of strokes and dots. Though that was nothing, Saul thought, merely tiredness from overstudy. But since the Roman examiners had refused him his cadetship in a vessel of war on account of it, he felt sensitive on the point. She might not understand it. She was always so proud, so strong. Should he marry her first and tell her after? No, he decided, that would not be fair. He would wait until he caught her in a less exalted mood. . . . And she would put her hand on him, and say, "It will pass, Saul." And he would know it would pass.

It was the night after Atonement. The scapegoat with the flannel tongue on its horn had been led from the Temple altar through the Nicanor Gate, through the Shushan Gate, over the Kedron, past the Mount of Olives, and led into the Wilderness of Judea. The lamps of the great golden candlestick had been lighted. And from the house of Caiaphas near the Zion Gate, Saul and Anna went through the streets of the moonlit vineyards. The October moon rose over the golden land. The yellow leaves of the vines were pale gold in the moonlight. Everywhere the young girls of the city danced, dressed in white robes. The timbrels tinkled and crashed. The wild wail of a Hebrew song was in the air, intoxicating as wine. The girls, in white robes, were like flowering almond-trees. The moon, like deep yellow wine.

From the white circle of the dancing maidens,
The young man chooses the girl he wishes to wive—

Psaltery and sambuca; throbbing of little drums; wail of singer; beside him, silver as the bits of the Roman horses, white, precious as chaste silver, Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas:

Remember that beauty wanes as wanes the moon,
So choose a maiden who loves and seeks the Lord!

Oh, Anna the daughter of Priest Caiaphas!

"Anna," he began, "there is something I wish to tell you—"

She was looking away from him. She might not have been listening to him. "Yes," she said.

But his heart misgave him. Surely this soft autumnal night, with the joy of the Atonement in his heart, in hers, was of all nights not the night to speak of weakness and disease.

"Yes," she said again, as though waiting.

"Some other time, Anna," he finished lamely.

"Then let us go in," she said harshly. "It is cold and silly in the moonlight." He was glad he had not mentioned weaknesses. She was not in the mood. No, Anna was not in the mood.

§ 5

He never told her. Next day he arose heavy, as if the walls of the house were oppressing him. He attended service, bothered, uneasy. It seemed to him that all the marble, the silver and gold, were heavy in the air, making the air heavier, heavy on the top

of his head and at the back of his neck. All around him was a thick yellowish cloud, through which he saw people dimly.

All morning it clung about him. He felt uneasy. He wished some one, some friend, were near. And yet he didn't want to tell anybody. It was so foolish. He would start up from his seat. He found it impossible to stay in one place. He arose and went into the streets.

"It will pass in a little while," he said.

But a great fear of the streets came on him, once he was in them. He jostled against people, who cursed him. Hurtled against donkeys. Camels shoved him here and there. He began to get afraid. He moaned once or twice. A little foam showed at the corners of his mouth. He began to run blunderingly.

Coming toward him sedate and self-contained, sure of her strength and beauty, was Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas. He saw her like a harbor of refuge. Here was security; no more fear.

"Anna! Anna!" he moaned thickly, and blundered toward her. He could not see. People rushed out of his way. "Anna! Anna!" . . .

When Saul was conscious again, a curly-headed Roman officer was kneeling over him, his leather helmet with the ridge of white horsehair on the ground beside him. In Saul's mouth was the taste of leather, and putting his hand there he found the officer had wedged the scabbard of his sword between his teeth. Saul's tunic was unfastened, his face wet with water, his phylacteries on the ground.

"That was a bad one," said the officer. "You struggled like a wrestler." He stood up. "Feeling better now?"

"Yes," said Saul weakly. "It was—was kind of you."

"Not at all. Anybody would have helped. I've a brother who has them."

Saul felt a bit light-headed, but well. By the wall the Jews looked on, inquisitive, aloof. The soldiers helped him to his feet, murmuring sympathy in their heavy guttural Gaulish, dusting his cloak, handing him his phylacteries with loutish kindness. Very aloof, very disapproving, the Jews stood, shocked that a young Pharisee should let himself be touched by the unclean mercenaries.

"Was there a girl in the street when I fell?"

"Indeed there was. Shallow-looking, prim girl with reddish hair. You were headed straight for her when you dropped."

"Did she stop?"

"Not she! Ran like a hare. Do you know her?"

"Yes," said Saul firmly, "I know her."

"Well, I must be getting forward," said the officer. "Don't get excited if you can help it. That's what brings my brother's attacks on."

"Thanks again, from the bottom of my heart." Saul said. "I am a Roman citizen."

"Are you, by Mercury! I thought you looked different from the usual inhabitant. Not that it matters in a case like this. Well, *ave, frater!* Sergeant, have the men fall in!"

§ 6

The caravan was gathered at dawn at the Damascus Gate. Not yet from the Temple had come the trumpet-blasts that told the sun was on Hebron. Oxen, camels, sheep, horses, wandered about. The oxen lowed, the camels grunted, the sheep gave out their loud, plaintive cry. Here were all manner of travelers, pale Egyptians, Syrians with head-dress held before their mouths, native herds in rags, porsy merchants, desert chieftains, women. Here was a prostitute on a white mule, with her hair arranged like a tower, after the old fashion of Canaan. From the hem of her cloak showed her long drawers of pink silk. Near her a band of pilgrims chanted their farewell to the city of David:

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
The holy place of the tent of the Most High!

Creak of leather and jingle of bit announced the Roman cavalry escort in the dawn. Close to the Jordan prowled the riders of Arabia Petræa, circling like wolves. Against them no man's lives or goods were safe, and occasionally their spear-heads showed like smoke in the desert. The Romans must shoulder the responsibility of protecting the travelers. The sheikh of the caravan gave the order for starting.

"In the name of God, blessed be He!"

The cameleers brought their cattle to their feet with kicks and cries. The donkeys broke into their small trots. The prostitute shook up her reins, her

mule's silver bell giving a tinkle as of rippling water. The pilgrims broke into a passionate farewell:

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after Thee, O God . . .
I pour out my soul in me, for I had gone with the multitude;
I went with them to the House of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept
holyday. . . .

Saul raised himself in his stirrups and took his last bitter look at the city, the last of his life, he hoped. "If ever I forget thee, O Jerusalem!" he said aloud grimly.

A Sadducee merchant, who hoped for a companion on the journey, chimed in unctuously:

"Yes, it is written: 'if I put not Jerusalem above my chief joy!'"

Saul turned on him savagely.

"Tarsus, my city, is a great city, a city of kindness, a city of friends."

The Sadducee looked at him and edged away. "Oh, a Pharisee! a zealot! a boy looking for a quarrel. With a knife, maybe! *Fui*, what a bad look he's got!" he shivered. And aloud he proclaimed: "Oh, Tarsus is a jewel of a city, a most metropolitan city. Did I say anything against Tarsus? I should die!"

"Do you know Tarsus, huckster?"

"No, but any city your Highness comes from," he agreed, "is a crowning city. Oh, lovely!" And he edged off and mopped his forehead. "Oh! *fui*, what an eye! What a bad man!"

CHAPTER VI

§ 1

ALL their elaborate washing of hands, their posturings, their steps that way, their steps this way; all their tithing of mint, anise, and cummin; all their meticulous differences of the Tephellin shel Yod, and the Tephellin shel Rosh, phylacteries of the hand and phylacteries of the head; all their double fasts, and triple prayers; all their excessive ritual as to killing fowl and husking vegetables; their coloring of fringes, their arrangement of tassels; all their mania of Sabbatism: that the sick might not send for a physician, that a pilot should drop the rudder though in the midst of a storm on the Sabbath day; all their disputes as to whether inanimate things should keep the Sabbath, as to whether a lamp lit before the Sabbath should be put out on that day, or fish-nets withdrawn lest by working they should desecrate the holy hours; all the protestations of Shammai, that the true Jew should be occupied during the week in thinking how he would keep the Sabbath; all their elaboration of rabbinical legends and rules, their haggadoth and halachoth; all seemed to Saul now but fags of sophistry, vast, unprofitable burdens. For the sake of the community at Tarsus, and for the district of Cilicia, where he was now the

most notable Jew, he observed such of the laws as he could, skirting around those which were intolerable by ingenuity learned in the schools of Jerusalem. Of all the religion born in him, of all he had learned of the Law in Jerusalem, there remained only one thing firm in his heart, the immense truth of the unity of God. "Thus saith the Lord," had chanted Isaiah the dervish, "the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts; I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God." In his heart Saul knew that to be true. That to him was all revelation. But what of the conduct of life? He did not know. He only knew that it did not rest in the size of the letters on phylacteries.

With all its faults, knowing of no better scheme of life than the Hebrew scheme, he had accepted it; and keeping to it, he had gained credit with the governors of his people. Because he saw in the Amharist Jews of his district a tendency to fall away from the doctrine of the Unity, to be drawn into the easy theogony of the Greeks, he had labored among them, to keep them true to their faith. His fierce, gushing oratory held them. He had a sort of power over them in speaking, moving them as the calm, aloof thinking of the Greeks never moved them. And because of his fame among the Jews of his native province, because the Romans respected him, because of his repute as a citizen and a manufacturer, from Jerusalem they had thrust honors on him, which he had not sought. At little more than thirty he was a corresponding member of the Sanhedrim. With the priests and elder rabbis, with the graybeards

dull with learning, and the priests keen with politics, he had power of life and death in religious matters. . . . They had asked him several times to return to Jerusalem, and he had refused. He wondered cynically, if he had stayed at Jerusalem, and sought for place and honors, would he have received them. Hardly, he smiled. He was remembered there as the clever student of Gamaliel, who had returned home on account of ill health. A safe man, the Temple authorities had thought. Only to a safe man, a mediocrity, are honors given. Saul wondered, if the Sanhedrim knew his real views as to the Law, would they tolerate him. They might, he smiled even more cynically; there was, he thought with the maturity of ten years' absence, a vast amount of hypocrisy in the city of God. He wondered, with all their fasts and visits to the Temple, how many of them really felt, felt it glowing in their hearts, that God was, and that God was One.

Ah, he was better where he was, Saul knew; the last ten stirring years would have been too much for him. His health would not have suffered it. At his age, thirty now, a man knew his physical limitations, or he was a fool. Besides, in a life as in Jerusalem, in the savage politics of the Temple, a man grew hard and shallow. It was better here in Tarsus, sitting on the cool roof of his house by the Cydnus, swift tide and deep river bringing blessed sleep, and watching the stars. Under the stars at some times the brain would function like some intricate Roman device, the sequence of thought to clear thought being a delight and a mystery. And at other times something

transcending thought would rise on cool white wings from within you outward, until you felt at one with all the stars and trees and seas of God, and you would see deep meanings in phrases out of an old ritual that once you had spoken carelessly. Spring night, and one swan on the swift river, and the warm call of the cuckoo in the hedge-rows, and in the west the frail new-born crescent. There was a vast humility in your heart when you bowed your head and blessed God, who renews Israel and the moon. The silver trumpets at Jerusalem might peal, but did the trumpet blowers or the trumpet bearers understand? Might there be not more worship in the sailors' flutes and calathes?

Yes, he was glad he had come back to Tarsus, taken up his father's work, married, and had a little son. His father's house was a haven of peace. In Jerusalem he would not have done better. Indeed in Jerusalem, he thought, there would have been a great temptation for him. Johanan, who baptized folk in the Jordan, Johanan, the vast gaunt dervish, had an appeal for him some years before. In Jerusalem the rumor had gone about that Elijah had arisen, and thousands had flocked out to be reviled by the grim eremite, to fall under his sway. The prayers and prostrations of the Pharisees evoked no respect in Johanan. Their white cloaks where they were soiled were carefully whitened with chalk, but John saw through their souls as easily as he discerned the spots on their garments. How deep the teaching of the ragged wild-eyed maniac had sunk no man knew. He taught repentance for sins; he

taught community of goods. Thousands, tens of thousands, had obeyed him, had shared their little or their great, and come back from the Jordan, singing joyously, feeling free of their sins, as they had never felt free after the loosing of the goat into the wilderness. He was a man, Johanan was, a great figure, but he had gone too far when he advised the soldiers to lay down their arms. . . . Then Antipas arrested him—the new procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate, for all his broad tolerance and aloof views of a Platonist, would not allow that doctrine of brotherly love to be preached. But Antipas was afraid of Johanan. Antipas wasn't sure about Elijah. He was a strange man, Herod Antipas, credulous and cynical, cruel and yet soft. The Galilean dandy, with his blue perfumed beard, who had dared to outrage the opinion of Rome, the loyalty of Galilee, and the king of Arabia's wrath, by seducing and marrying Herodias, his live brother's sister, and putting away his own slim Arab wife; yet before Johanan he had quailed. Johanan's imprisonment in gloomy Machærus, ghost and ghoulish haunted Machærus, was more nominal than real until he had begun to launch anathemas against Antipas for his marriage, and even then Antipas had pardoned him. Herodias, the gleaming and bitter, whose face was beautiful as spring, whose soul was torrid as summer, could not prevail upon him until she had enlisted the aid of her daughter Salome, whose dancing was an evil magic. By a stratagem Herodias and Salome had secured the death of the great dervish.

"I should like the head of Johanan," had lisped the daughter of Herodias, "on a platter."

And some foul negro had descended into the cells of Machærus with a sword, and the mouth of Johanan that had preached thousands into repentance was dumb in death as death itself; the eyes that had struck terror, and seen God knows what terrors in the wilderness, were now glazed as those of a stricken ox. And the common people, who had seen in him a prophet, now knew that to the kingly and great he was no more than jeweled trinket, a handful of gold coins, a present to a dancing-girl. . . . She was clever, was Herodias. She knew the mind of the mob, Saul thought, how fearful they were, how easily impressed. She might be clever, Saul thought, wife of the tetrarch, the most powerful woman in Asia! She was to be another, a successful Cleopatra? Perhaps, Saul agreed, but she was only a painted whore, and John was a great man.

John had been a great man, Saul corrected himself, but now was an instance in a cynical tale. A prophet and a leader, but a reward for a dancing-girl's lewd postures. Herodias had killed Johanan, but had she killed Johanan's people, Johanan's words? Jesus, the Nazarene magician, whom Caiaphas had had executed a year ago, had seized on the Baptizer's following, and, but for Caiaphas, would have led them God knows whither. John was a great man, an ascetic, a teacher, with no Messianic pretensions; but Jesus, with his rabble of commoners, with Mary, the prostitute of Magdala, the wife of

Pappus, in the forefront of his band, with his foul Egyptian magic, with his clever flattering of the poor—he was a figure to be hated, to be despised. Judas, the fanatical communist of Kyrioth, had been so disgusted by the royal pretensions, by the acceptance of spices and oils lavished on himself, while he preached charity to the poor, that he had betrayed him to Caiaphas, cynically, for a handful of silver. True, the Kyrioth communist had hanged himself afterward, but Judas was always a madman, a creature of impulses. Hadn't Cephas, Jesus' right-hand man, denied him in the house of Caiaphas? Would any of Johanan's disciples have betrayed him? Would Manæn, the Essene, have denied him? Ah, no! There was a man.

But this oily Galilean Jew, this Jesus, with all his mystery about himself: his supposed quiet boyhood in Nazareth, when he probably was most of the time in Alexandria, studying the foul science of the Egyptians; his time in the wilderness, being tempted by the devil, forsooth, when he was most of the time knee to knee and breast to breast with the enemy of the people. . . . In the wilderness were the goats laden with the people's sins, and folks said these goats died not, but were filled with the immortality of demons, and from them were secrets to be learned. From that foul, hollow place the Nazarene had returned. . . . His familiar had held him on the surface of the water; his demon had taught him to throw a seeming on the people, telling them they were filled with bread and fishes. And he had done

the unforgivable thing, the thing that even Satan dared not himself do: by magic and the inverted power of God he had flung life into dead men. . . . Drunk with power and hope, and proclaiming himself as God, he had gone up to Jerusalem, uttering the ultimate blasphemy, that he could destroy the house of the Living God. . . . And there his demon had deserted him, or had fled before the breastplate of the High Priest, and left him a foolish, impotent Galilean before the veiled hands, and face cold as a knife, sharp as a knife, and the horned blue bonnet of Caiaphas. Where was his cunning, that had made him flee the interest and proffered friendship of Antipas, Antipas, sleek as a cat, caressing as a cat, treacherous as a cat? Yea, but his end had come, between two thieves, himself the greatest thief of the three, the thief of the teaching of Johanan, the thief of the hearts of the people, the thief of the power of God.

Johanan first; Jesus the Nazarene; who next, thought Saul?

"Saul, the night is coming. It is ill thinking in the starlight. Will you not come down?"

His mother had come up to him, his frail Persian mother, who had changed so much in the years he had been home. She who had been harsh and cold as a spear-head, cold as the face of Caiaphas, had become a frail old woman, white and frail as a narcissus, and very beautiful. In her eyes always was an appeal to him. It was as though they had struggled against each other for years, and then suddenly

she had given in. Though that they had been struggling Saul had not been aware. What her eyes wanted he did not know.

"Saul," she asked, "will you do something for me?"

"What do you wish?"

"Be kind to your wife, Nossis," she said. And she had almost added, "Be kind to me."

"How am I unkind?" he said. "Have I ever chidden her? Have I ever been cruel to her? How?"

"You think so much, Saul. You sit apart and think. Saul," she pleaded, "cannot you be merry and kind? We had rather you were rough than cold. Saul, don't think so much."

"I am as I am," he said. "What is wrong?"

"There is nothing wrong. And it is that. When I was young," she said, "I was hard as a diamond. When I had you to breast, I was hard. Though I was a wife and mother, I was a virgin in my heart. And now, Saul," her voice quivered a little in the starlight, "I know I was wrong. It is wrong to be a secret treasure to yourself. Your coins grow moldy, Saul, and when you wish to use them they are no longer currency, and you know it would have been better to have lavished them away. I know now," she said, "Saul, that feeling is better than thought."

"It is written," he said, "honor thy father and thy mother. Have I not always honored you?"

"It is a cold word, Saul. Listen," she said; "once I feared for you, because you seemed a weakling, and I was a little ashamed of you, my son, for I felt in my pride that out of my womb should come a

wonder unto men; and now I am afraid of you, Saul, my son. Is that not a terrible thing, Saul, my son, that your wife and your mother, and your father a little, should fear you?"

"But what have I done," he asked, "that you feel like this?"

"You have done nothing, Saul . . . my son."

"Then don't you see," he told her, "that this is a foolishness?"

"Yes, Saul," she agreed. She shivered a little in the cold starlight.

§ 2

He had thought, when he had settled down in the weaver's house, gone about his father's great business, helping him, married, taken an interest in his coreligionists of the province, that his life would have been full, as any man's was. Saul knew that an outsider looking at him would say: "There goes a man who is happy. He has a fine business; his father is a shrewd likable man, his mother a fine patrician Jewess, his wife young and pretty, very nearly beautiful; he is rich and charitable." Saul granted all these things, but he said to himself: "Is that all there is to life? Do the others get nothing out of life?"

For if this were all, then it was a fraud. The Greeks were right. Not to be born is better. He despised the man who sought so keenly for money. A crust of bread, a jug of harsh wine, a handful of olives, and an appetite for it, were as satisfying as

the feasts in Tarsan gardens, breams swimming in oil, red beef, tongues of nightingales, honey of Capharnahum, lampreys and oysters, grasshoppers dressed with saffron, herons' eggs. A draft of well-water was as pleasant as wine cooled with snow. He had said this to Nossis, his wife with the Greek name, herself more than half a Greek.

"But they are much more pleasant, Saul," Nossis had said in her voice that was like music.

"They are not more pleasant to me."

"Ah!" Nossis had said. And no more. Those were the days when he used try to talk to Nossis. Before he discovered you couldn't talk much to a woman. They had not minds like men.

But there you are. A softer couch, a pleasanter house, more expensive food. Was that worth the day's fierce labor? And people's clothes, their tunics of silk, gold fillets and gold embroidered sandals. Jewels, to wear them was a reproach to the poor, a piece of bad taste. What good were emeralds, rubies? Except their rarity.

"Look at the colors you get from them," Nossis had said. "Green like an olive-tree, green like the sea, green like the evening. Red like the sea-anemone, red like vervain. Jewels go to the head like wine."

"But they are stones," Saul told her. "You can't get anything from stones."

"Yes, but you can put things into them," Nossis had said.

"How can you put things into them?"

"I can't tell you how"—Nossis had put her hand

on her small bosom and looked at him from her dark eyes—"but you can." Nossis could not see truth, harsh, granite-like truth. Or did she not wish to?

But the folk who fooled themselves in this world had a better time than those who saw clearly. The folk who found pleasantness in rich goods, who could take delight, as the Nubian savages delight, in the glitter of trinkets. And love of women, for which all men seemingly contended. Was that so wonderful? According to the tradition of his people, he had married. "Male and female created He them," it was written, and Hillel and Shammai both had agreed that an unmarried Jew was but half a man. But was it so wonderful? Solomon's song of songs; Ovid, who was lately dead at Tomi—Ovid's songs; all the songs of the Greeks. And Saul said, weary of thought these men turn back and are natural. All men were not weary of thought. Then it must be for delight they went to love. But was it so wonderful?

Nossis, when she had married him, would never have wearied of love, had he not rebuked her. At first she loved to sit on her couch covered with delicate Babylonian rugs, to sit there white in the dim light and admire herself, like some heathen woman in the Greek baths. "I am very like old ivory, Saul," she had said, "warm, and fretted here and there with pale gold. My breast is like a cygnet's, soft and warm. Also, now that I notice, I have intricate silver knees—"

"Cover yourself up, girl," he had said harshly.

"Is it not written: 'I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself'?"

She looked at him with still eyes from her white face.

"Why do you come to me?" she asked.

"To beget children, of course."

Her eyes grew misty. It was like a sea-mist over a bank of wood-violets or of purple hyacinths.

"Why the tears, Nossis?" he asked roughly.

"Because a minute ago, Saul, I was a young, laughing girl, and now I am a woman. That is why I weep. You wouldn't understand, Saul, why I weep."

And as she reached for her white silk garments, Saul saw that the shining narcissus-like beauty had gone from her, all her winged gracefulness. She was a woman, putting on her garments with a heavy clumsiness.

"Life," he explained—he felt a little bothered, guilty, "life is serious."

"So serious, Saul?" she said wanly. "So, so serious? I am sorry, Saul, I hadn't known."

When their child was born and lived but a few weeks, it was Saul who had been stricken into white dumbness. The funny little morsel, with the face of an old man, had vaguely terrified him. And when its fingers had closed about his forefinger, Saul felt he could cry out at the pathos.

"He won't live, Saul," Nossis had said, and wept easily.

"He will live," Saul had said with fierceness. Ah, but he hadn't!

When he died, Nossis had been comforted by his mother. The harsh Persian mother had drawn the distraught girl into her arms. But Saul retired into himself, white and hard and dumb. His father had sensed what Saul was feeling, and tried clumsily to comfort him. "I wish I could say something, Saul. . . . Ah, but God is good. There will be others." Ah, yes, Saul thought, but he would never forget that clutch on his forefinger. Nossis—Nossis got over it. She wept her heart out, and dried her eyes, and Saul's mother patted her on the back. And in a little while she was all but merry again.

He was stricken and dumb, dumb as night. He was hard, hard as some black coast. He was blind with some warped pride not to show how hurt he was. (Had it lived, it might have loved him!) He seemed bloodless as the dead. He was aloof. Nossis tried to help him.

"What is it, Saul? Why is it? Cannot we help you? We only want to help you."

"It is nothing, Nossis. I need no help."

"Ah, but you do," she said. "Saul," she pleaded, "I cannot come to the desolate place where you stand alone. Cannot you come back to us? To me?"

"I don't understand you, Nossis."

"Ah, Saul . . . !"

§ 3

If he had lived, little Saul, what then?

What was there for him in life? For a little while

a world of wonder. Then a time of disillusionment, then duty. All the duty done, what then?

Pharisaism taught a resurrection, but in what guise, to what state, none knew. Gamaliel's teaching was vague on the point. The honest rabbi gave the reasons of others. "Haggai says this, and Hillel said this, and of this matter this is what Judas bar-Timeus, of Crete, wrote." "But what do you think, Rabban?" And Gamaliel would refuge himself behind his favorite text. "Have you not read: 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?'"

In the starry evenings, on the roof of the weaver's house in Tarsus, he had spent hour after hour, his chin resting on his hand, his hand plucking his trimmed young man's beard, seeking to find the kernel of truth. Possibly all was in the Law, but to pitch the mind to the minds of the dead rabbis and scribes who wrote was impossible in these modern days. What value a man gave to a word, what a phrase meant to him who was dead these centuries, was impossible to arrive at now. Old traditions of worship lasted, but what hidden meaning that posture had, this ablution, none knew any more. And glosses were mere guesswork after all. God lived; nothing was more certain than that God lived, and that God was One. Man lived, too. In the Law was the injunction to increase and multiply, and were that even wanting there was always the instinct of man born of woman to perpetuate himself. The fox went to the vixen, neither of whom knew the Law. The very instinct of life. And instinct was the beginning. The small child sought its

mother's breast. This was instinct. It was only later that an entity developed. There was first an instinctive self, which was no more than human life in the mass. Then developed the emotional self. A child cried if it burned itself, was angry if beaten. Then a reasoning self developed. If fire burns, beware of it; beware of what drew on the beating. Instinct was left behind then to birds and beasts. And out of the emotional and reasoning selves our entity grew. Reason curbing emotion, blotting out instinct. And emotion driving one forward as wind drives a sailing-vessel, once reason had taken its decision.

But this entity was housed by the body, fed by the body. It was composed of hereditary instinct, of experience, and of emotion which the food consumed by the body provided. Granted the entity. Each man's entity was different, differences of body and differences of experience explaining the difference. But when the body died, on which the entity was fed, what of the entity? It must die, too. That was plain. For all the dreams of rabbinical mystics, the entity must also die.

The Romans and Greeks, whose philosophy he knew now was deep as the rabbinical one, though not so intricate, accepted it. Accepted it with a grace and dignity unknown to the Jews. They laid away or burned the body, and left a writing that was like a sigh. "Lalage, who lived such a little time!" "Hippomena, wife of Jason of Tyre. She was called the Fair. Alas!" "Lynceus, a poet of Mycenæ, lieth here. Come noon, come night, he will not see

roses, nor the moon rise any more!" They were gallant, these Gentiles. His own folk were either crazed or mystics or surly Sadducees. Gracefulness in living, gracefulness in dying, his folk had none. All their lives they were imprisoned by the Law, and when the end came, they went, was it not written, to a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

"Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?" he quoted aloud.

"What are you thinking of, Saul?" Nossis had come on the terraced roof on her light feet, on her feet silver as the silver buckles on her sandals, on her feet light as snow.

"I think of life and death," he said harshly, "and of the resurrection of the dead."

"I think of it, too," she said lightly, and her lightness grated on him. "I think," she said, "of after a kind and good and happy life coming into a sunny merry place, where there is dancing, Saul, and trees, and rivers, and swans and cranes on the rivers, Saul. And all the good folk you ever knew will be there, the folk you loved and the folk you wanted to love, and all the trees you loved, and the children, and the lambs, and the little donkeys. And the gallant Greeks and the Romans, strong as elephants. And the people who are good, but solemn, you will see them merry there. And one will help the folk who are alive, so that they, too, may come to the sunny dancing place, and be merry."

"What of the Lord? What of the Law?" Saul asked.

"Those are beyond me, Saul, except that I believe God is good, and that in that place we can be good without such heaviness of the Law."

"What is being good?" Saul sneered a little.

"Being good? Oh, that is simple, Saul. Being merry and kind. Not cruel, not avaricious. Crying a little with the folk in trouble, so that the strain of it is taken from them, and that they feel they are not alone, have friends, Saul. Laughing people out of their faults. All that is being good, Saul."

"What of the men and women who are cruel, the people of dark ways?"

"They go back and try again, Saul, I think."

"Girl, this is not Judaism!"

"No, Saul, it is not Judaism. It is not anything. It is just I, Nossis."

"Nossis, little woman," he said. Her simplicity, her childishness had touched him for an instant—

"Nossis, go away. I want to think seriously."

Hurt, she went away.

§ 4

If this were all then, wherein was the use of living? The Greek Socrates, when questioned by his pupils as to why he did not commit suicide, seeing he believed that life was the same as death, had answered that it was not worth while, seeing that death was the same as life. This was mere cleverness. Why did we continue to live? Death was not so terrible,

seeing that every man born of woman suffered it. And in it, the Septuagint taught, was peace. The struggles of youth, the disillusionment of manhood, the frailty of age, were they worth it? Though God was One, was the knowledge of that truth sufficient to fill a life? It was not. By ruined Anchiale, Sargon, king of kings, snapped his fingers and told a worn-out world to eat, drink, and be merry. If one knew no more the sun when one died, surely this were wiser, and let God be One if he wished. . . . For all that the Gentiles preached the hollowness of life, yet they did not practise it. Else the Greeks would not set up ideal abstractions to follow, the Romans be gallant and strong. For a little while they ate, drank, and were merry, and then grew serious again. And the government of the world went on. The righteous were honored, not mocked; evil men were punished; those in authority were upright. Surely this was no philosophy—to eat, drink, and be merry. Wickedness—covetousness, cruelty, vengeance—stood out because it stood against a background of folk who were not evil. Evil was not the rule.

Was it possible that most people were good? By far most people were good? It was not only possible, Saul thought, it was certain.

If most people were good, then, seeking no reward of a future life, as no thinking man would, must it not be an instinct in them, an instinct as deep as life itself? Then the instinct came, as life itself came, from God.

Then if the instinct of kindness and tempered

uprightness came from God, He must be kind and temperedly upright—

Then if God were kind and temperedly upright—

One thing was certain. He wasn't the God of Jerusalem, the aloof, hating God on the throne of blue hyacinth. He was—

Look at it another way, Saul thought, this evil whence it comes matters not; that is a subtlety for Socrates. Evil exists. The figure known to his own people, Satan, who went up and down the world and to and fro in it, was a symbol. It existed, but it was not so strong, anywhere near so strong, as the good, else the good should be conquered. But it was a power.

Witchcraft existed. It was mentioned in Holy Writ. The laws of all peoples recognized it, and laws were only the crystallized common sense of states. The traditions of all peoples admitted it. It was written: Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. Magicians existed. Apollonius of Tyana, who had studied at Tarsus, Jesus of Nazareth. These men had power over demons. Demons existed. Demons took the bodies of weak folk in moments of weakness and used them for evil. Demons were evil folk who had died. They could exist without bodies.

If evil folk who had died could exist without bodies, how of the righteous who had died? Could not they, too?

A light step behind him, and two cool hands over his brow and eyes, like cool linen bandages dipped in well-water.

"Saul, I will not go away."

He was so tired of problems that he did not wish her to go away.

"You must stop thinking, Saul. You will make yourself ill and weak. And you hate yourself to be ill and weak. Saul, there is no profit in thinking."

"There is," he said. "I have thought that most people are good."

"But there is no thinking in it, Saul. Everybody knows that," Nossis said.

CHAPTER VII

§ I

HE had been a little worried recently by a new spirit, a new secretive spirit in his favorite Tarsan synagogue, the synagogue near the riverside, the Synagogue of the Moorings. Among the poorer members there seemed to be some kind of a bond, as of a society, and when Saul appeared they stopped speaking, changed the conversation. He had noticed a rapt look on some of their faces. The respect which they owed to a member of the Sanhedrim was lacking, not in any material thing he could place his finger on, but in a certain atmosphere. Formerly, when he would expound some intricate point of Law with ingenuity, they would follow his mental steps with pleasure, as though they were proud to have Gamaliel's pupil among them, but latterly they seemed bored. The Law to them was a hardship, and Saul sympathized with them, but hardship or no hardship, they were not going to treat it lightly. He would see to that.

He noticed, too, a certain laxity about work. And one man to whom he had spoken of it had said: "What's the use? To-morrow the world may come to an end!" And when Saul questioned him as to whence this new doctrine, the weaver had become

silent. Also there was a new disrespect growing up for riches. Some Alexandrian Jews, followers of Johanan, had come to Tarsus, and baptized many in the Cydnus, and preached a community of goods. And that had flourished for a while. There was nothing in the Law against baptism, nor against a community of goods. If people repented of their sins, it was all the better for them. And the community of goods, well, poor devils! they had little enough, and who was to blame them if they liked to share? During the movement of Jesus the Nazarene there had been many to follow his teaching, to listen to the stories told of him. Fishermen and clodhoppers most had been, and the very poor—ignorant people who had swallowed every tale of magic. A Levite from the Temple had spoken in the Synagogue of the Moorings one day, denouncing him. Not refuting his works of wonder, for there had been too many witnesses to those, but explaining them by a superstition gross as the peasants'. Jesus had, the Levite explained, had the most Holy Name of God, the Tetragrammaton, written on parchment, and carried it about in a wound made in his side—the Name of Power, which only the High Priest might say in the Temple of the Living God. From this profanation all his power came. . . . The Levite was a sly, red-haired man, with tufts of coarse bristles in his nostrils, and speaking of Jesus to Saul, had leered at and dwelt on the name of Mary of Magdala who followed the sorcerer. . . . A vulgar fellow. The cult of the sorcerer was vulgar,

what with publicans and prostitutes and thaumaturgy—but the refutation of it was more vulgar still.

After Annas and Caiaphas had nailed him up as a thief, his cult had dwindled. There were none in Tarsus certainly in the presence of the resident of the Sanhedrim to claim him as Master. But what, what in Heaven's name, had the people got hold of this time? He had heard vague rumors of meetings in secret here and there, meetings of men and women with no screen between them. Could there be an idol anywhere mixed up in this? His jaw tightened.

He had not long to wait until he discovered it. For some weeks there had been an undercurrent of excitement among the poorer members of the synagogue, and one Sabbath eve he found two strangers in the house by the moorings. The one was a poor Jew of the laboring class; the other a Greek convert to Judaism, a lean, white-haired man with a great kindness and peace in his face. He had features ascetic as some ideal priest's, and so soft, so white the hair on his head that it seemed a ceremonial cap. Saul noticed that his threadbare clothes were the garments of a Greek gentleman; and his speech, for all its simplicity, had a ring of classicism about it.

"For in the Law is no redemption," said the stranger. "You have read: 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?'"

"That we may buy the poor for silver'"—the

Greek's voice was low and scornful—"and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" "

Saul noticed, as he noticed the dim worshipping, the raptness of the poorer members' faces as they listened, the surliness, the murmuring of the elder men. There was a hush as he entered; the elder men looking glad, the poor members a little afraid. Here was the young resident of the Sanhedrim with his blue-fringed shawl, his broad phylacteries.

"Who is this?" Saul asked; "and what is his argument?"

"He is a certain one of the Greeks," Saul was told, "one Stephen, and he preaches Jesus the Nazarene."

"Oh," Saul laughed, "him who was hanged!"

"He who was hanged, brother," said Stephen, "was the Christos, the promised one, the Son of Man."

"It is written," Saul sneered: "'And this Son of Man, whom thou hast seen, will lift up kings and mighty ones from their couches, and the strong from their thrones, and will loosen the bridles of the strong and break the teeth of sinners. And He will hurl the kings from their thrones and from their kingdoms, because they do not exalt Him and praise Him.' . . . Where are the broken thrones, Stephen, the rejected kings? Where is the leaping of the mountains like rams, and the hills like lambs that are satisfied with milk?"

"It is also written"—Stephen bowed his head: "'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of

sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.

“‘But he was wounded for our transgressions’”—Stephen raised his head and looked straight at Saul—“‘he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.’”

“Though you shed no blood, Stephen, yet your doctrines are worse than daggers to Israel. Do you stay at Tarsus?” All in the synagogue were silent at the threat in his voice.

“I go on to Jerusalem, brother.”

“And you will speak of Ha-Notzri, the Nazarene, as the Messiah there?”

“I will preach the Lord Jesus wherever I go.”

“Then you will die in Jerusalem.”

“Even though I die, Saul, I will preach the Lord Jesus. I will teach the Way. For it is the true Way. And the Lord Jesus is the true Christos. Though I should die a hundred times.”

Saul shrugged his shoulders.

§ 2

He was surprised to find, thinking later about it, how easily he had been inflamed by this discussion on religion. He had thought, living in Tarsus as he did, quietly, married, a partner in all but profits of his father's great business—and those he could

have, too, did he wish—that he had put aside the fever of Jerusalem forever. In Tarsus he had done good work for his race. So upright had been his business, so free from chicane, that Roman and Greek and Syrian honored him, and his own folk had learned that honesty brought in more profit in the end than shrewd dealing. . . . With Greek and Roman, and with Syrian sheikh, he was on terms of respect and friendship. He had thought of himself as his Jewish philosopher more than anything else, and now this short discussion had lighted a flame in his heart.

If they wished to regard the Nazarene as the Messiah, why shouldn't they? he asked himself. What was there in it, really, against the Law? They claimed that the Nazarene had risen from the dead, and had been seen. The Sadducees wouldn't like that, but was it not good Pharisee propaganda, that there was a resurrection of the dead? It was claimed they were wine-bibbers, immoral people. Well, dram-drinking was not unknown in the tetrarchs' house, and Antipas himself was no mirror of morals, no, nor many of the rabbis—with their scrupulous divorces. Every time Ben Amnei went to a strange town, he sent around the public crier for a wife, divorcing her legally when he left for the next town, and yet he was accounted a pillar of righteousness and an ornament of the Law. Repentance of sins, baptism. What was wrong in that? They were to be commended. And yet some flame of fanaticism in him made him hate this new sect. The flame

that set Pharisee and Sadducee and Samaritan all against them.

"The old Jew in me," he said, "dies hard."

He was very glad that he had his duties, his business here in Tarsus; that he had his house, his wife; that Nossis, poor Nossis! was going to have another child in a few months, else he might have felt tempted to go up to Jerusalem. For himself, the youngest of the Sanhedrim, there were many political posts open, and it would not have been good for him.

No, he was better here in Tarsus.

Here, on the roof of the weaver's house, among the pleasant little orange-trees in their tubs, the silver sand from the foreshore crisp beneath the feet, it was pleasant to sit and think. Beneath him the town lay in groves and gardens, flash of white fountain-water, and green of tree, a green polished as with oil. The vast clusters of the rhododendrons, better than roses; white spike of chestnut flowers; the cold river, with its iris and cranes, and the breeze that blew from Tarsus seaward and groveward, cool, chaste as snow. Westward the sun would go down, over the sea. A glow as of roses, and then a green sea-glow. And turning from the west your eye caught, suddenly, the single star; some poet of the Greeks had written gently:

O Hesperus, thou bringest all,
Thou bringest the wine, thou bringest the goat,
Thou bringest the child to his mother's knee!

Here in this exquisite house, it seemed to him that he could feel the entity he had imagined existed in itself. Something in himself seemed to come out and stand outside of the material him, and he thought to himself that the Greeks knew this phenomenon and had a name for it—"ecstasy"—a standing without one's self. A thing that could not be explained, but that he felt. He thought that he might with concentration turn and see beside him his own body, looking on it with a kindly philosophy, its shape, its grotesque offices, as on an old coat that had grown to the lines of yourself, that you were slightly fond of, but careless about. . . . In the green and gold hour, yourself came out of yourself and lived apart, seeing things unclearly but feeling things. The soft outline that had come on the trees, the blackbird's dying notes, the unwinking brilliance of the star, the chastity of it all, whether he knew these things in the body or out of the body he could not tell. All he knew was that something, fine as the spray of a flower, graceful as a young animal not weaned from its mother's dugs, came forth into the rare starlight and said, knowing it, "Not all of me shall die!"

This queer secret life of his, brought on by starlight and the scent of the blossoms of the orange-tree, seemed to him the only life worth living. In it he could think so clearly. In the daytime, when his eyes bothered him, or in summer, when the great brazen lid of the sky oppressed him with the fear of his illness, the corruptible body bothered him, so that he could not see clearly, act clearly. In starlight,

it seemed to him that he was so wise, so calm. He felt kindness toward everybody then. He was not irritated, he was not oppressed. The wisdom of the Neoplatonists, the symbolism of his faith, the warped psychology of his mother, the strange mixture of childishness and chicane his father was, all were pieces in a riddle he could not solve, but could now see clearly as pieces in a vast design. The unimaginable star and the easily probed chicane of men were each a separate fragment. . . .

He had become adept in this fashion of thought so that when the mood came he could not be disturbed. There was only one person of the household would intrude on his privacy, and that was Nossis. His father would never interrupt his thought, having for it the reverence of the unschooled man. Nor would his mother. But Nossis was so like a child. . . . He had schooled himself to let her speak her small silver prattle, until it was no more to him than the pleasant tinkling of a brook. Indeed it helped him think. Now that she was heavy with child, herself no more than a child, she liked to sit on the roof of the weaver's house, and watch below her the swift current of the life she could not take part in. Wrapped in her silken frock and in a voluminous robe of camel's hair, of the soft chosen hair of colt camels, she herself was like a child who was ill. Her name, Nossis, "a flame." She was like the flame of strained pure oil in a small silver lamp, a gracious and pretty thing, Saul thought. Nossis, who thought she was a Jewess, but was so Greek!

He would give her a kindly word, a pat, and go on with his thinking, while she would ply her silver needle and her silver voice, telling of some marvel of the day, or some curious sea-bred monster the fishermen had caught and were exhibiting for a piece of money, or of the trouble with, or stupidity of, one of the handmaidens, and how she had to intercede with Saul's mother to have the girl kept on. . . . Saul seemed to be listening, but he was not hearing a word.

He was thinking to himself that of all the folk in the world his own race was the only race which bothered itself about God. Greek and Gentile bothered themselves with vague actions and reactions of the mind. The common people doubtless believed in the gods, in Jupiter and Hermes, Juno and Aphrodite, but to the learned they were symbols of nature, terms given natural forces, recurrences of fact. Even the followers of the Nazarene, the lowest, most debased of all Jewish sects, even they believed in God.

Nossis dropped her square of silk cloth and silver embroidery-needle. Dropped her hands in her lap. In the vague starlight her face was white as the silk cloth, soft as silk.

"Now that I have almost come unto my time," she uttered quietly, "there is something, Saul, I wish to say to you. My husband, I am not speaking what comes easily to me. I have taken a long time to think of it, and taken much courage to say it . . . Saul. Please do not say anything until you hear me out. . . .

"I don't know what I want, Saul, but life is not as I thought it would be when I was a child, when I was a young girl in my father's house. I know it is difficult, not easy. . . . I don't know how to say it. But, though life is not easy, need it be sad, Saul? Need it be cold?

"I am not a good Jewess, I know. I mean, there is no great tradition of piety in my family. My father was not a pious Jew. But he was a good man, as you know, Saul. My grandparents worshiped As-tarte in Tyre. But they were good people, Saul. They never turned the hungry from the door, or were cruel to man or beast. All my brothers were good. Even my cousin, who follows the Lord Buddha in his understanding, has a grave, happy face. . . ."

Saul thought to himself that the cult of the Nazarene would have been impossible but for the work of Johanan. How many thousands, not alone in Palestine, but in Alexandria and in Syria, followed the Baptist, none knew. They were like sheep without a shepherd when Antipas had severed that reverend, eloquent head. The Nazarene had been of the Baptist's sect. A shrewd fellow. No place but Galilee could have produced that mixture of cunning and arrogance. . . .

"Some folks are grave from the cradle, Saul. And others are merry"; she took up her embroidery again. "Good people, I thought, were merry people—a dance, a song, Saul, a kiss that is like giving you a flower. . . . All my brothers were merry, and they were not evil. Our house was not an evil house.

I had dreamed somehow of a merry life. When I thought of a husband, Saul, I thought of one whose life I could make happy. What was it to me whether he was rich or poor? Were he poor I would make his way easy with a lightness of heart. And I thought: 'If sorrow comes on us, we will weep a little together, and dry each other's eye and smile at each other. And in the workshop, if he be poor, or in the marts if he be rich, he will remember in the heat of the day that when he returns there will be my smile and low laughter for him, and it will be like a cup of cool wine in the heat of the day.' . . . I thought of love, Saul, of my body that is—was—like a flower, and that it would be a delight to you, as a flower is, or some gentle appealing tree. I thought of love, Saul, as a little tempest, the flash of white lightning, and after it a gracious coolness, as of the little rain the narcissus loves. . . . I hadn't thought of it, as you think of it, Saul, that the body is a foul thing, and that love is a heavy, fever-laden air. . . . I still think I am right, Saul.

"Saul, I loved you. I love you. I will always love you. When first you came to my father's house, I loved your grave quietness. When you spoke, others listened with awe to the student of Gamaliel, but I thought," and her fingers dropped the embroidery again, "here is one who is shy, afraid, a little dark in himself. Nossis, he needs you. It is you who will take those too-early wrinkles from his forehead. And I said: 'When you marry him and go into his house,' for I knew you wanted to marry me

even then, 'there will be laughter and lightness and love for him. And for you, Nossis, for you also.' "

Not only had the Nazarene usurped Johanan's place among his followers, but he had warped Johanan's words to his own use. Johanan had said that there was one coming after him whose shoe's latchet he was unworthy to loose. And Jesus had smugly said: "I am He." Saul wondered what would have happened had the Galilean been confronted with the gaunt dervish. When two of Johanan's men came to Him from Johanan's prison, with Johanan's desire to know whether Jesus was the Messiah the old man expected, the Nazarene had not the brazenness to say He was. He had quibbled, pointed out his cures, which the leaders of the Therapeutæ, quietly and without any fuss, could, and did, better. And when Johanan's disciples were gone He had traded on the mission, saying: "See, Johanan expected Me. Johanan sends to Me. Johanan was the greatest of the prophets, and yet Johanan sends to Me." Oh, the man was clever, no fox cleverer, and yet . . . Why had none thought of asking Him to rescue Johanan from Antipas?

"But when I came into your house, Saul, it is: 'This is the Law and that is the Law. This is written, and have you not read that?' I am only a girl, Saul, a merry, happy girl. What are rolls and scrolls to me? What is the Law to me? I am not righteous. I am only good. What is Israel to me? My grandfather was of Tyre and a proselyte of the gate. He only knew that God was One and good and wise. He did not know that the Law would be a lock upon

his life, a chain about his children's feet. What are Rebecca and Sarah to me? What are Rachel and Leah? They had their lives. I have mine. . . .

"Saul, I dreamed, as girls dream, of the children we would have. Children white as silver. Strong children, who would swim in the Cydnus, and would come to me, weeping a little when they had been buffeted by the swans, and I would wipe their tears away, and make them laugh again. Children with golden faces, and feet brown as dates, and hair more curled than parsley. Oh, every young girl's children! But now, I know, Saul, that I shall never have strong children. None may live. Poor Saul, you are not strong. That is nothing to me. I love you the more for it. If I could take your illness on myself, I should do it. You know that, Saul. There is nothing I wouldn't do to make you well and happy, my dear one.

"But seeing there are to be no children such as I had dreamed, none to turn to with joy from a gray life, seeing I have only you, Saul, I must ask you this." Her voice was more a whisper than a voice. It was low as if it had in it something of the murmur of the trees. It floated across the roof like some spirit of a voice, like the murmur of the river, a little soft, wistful. . . .

There was no doubt the man was clever. Saul grinned as he thought of His question to the priests in the Temple as to whether Johanan's baptism was from heaven or of men. He had them badly there. They must either admit Johanan was divine or lay themselves open to the mercy of the mob. Always

back to Johanan, do you notice? Without Johanan Jesus was nothing, and He knew it. Still and all, Johanan was revenged, for Johanan's people had forced him into Jerusalem. Johanan might have escaped from Antipas, would have but for the furious hatred of Herodias, but what chance had Jesus of escape from the cool brain and horned blue bonnet of Caiaphas? A thief on the tree! The thief of the greatness of Johanan.

"It has taken me much time, Saul, to find words to say this, and much courage to utter them. If this small child of my body dies, Saul, seeing we have now none but each other, being one, can life not be a little gayer, a little softer for us? See, Saul, I have put away girlish things, and curbed my Greek songs lest they should bother you. Can you not come to me a little? I don't ask much. A little laughter, a little less rigidity in life. A barge on the Cydnus on moonlight nights, with some singers, and you, Saul. A kiss now and then, not a formal kiss, but to show me you love me. This, above all, Saul: a chance to give to you, myself, my heart. What can love of the Law, Saul," she asked, "give you that I cannot?"

One thing bothered him. Where had the Nazarene's body disappeared to? Joseph of Arimathea had given it temporary shelter in his family vault, but it had disappeared from there. Could Caiaphas, seeing the turbulence possible in a public funeral, fearing a procession to Nazareth, have had it removed, even on the Sabbath? Of course there was no Sabbath in the Temple, and arguing from

that it would be ceremonially possible, Caiaphas might feel himself justified. Still, was it likely that Caiaphas would bother? He was not afraid of the Nazarene's power when alive; was it likely that he would fear Him dead. Pilate? Not Pilate. He was probably reading his Plato an hour after the trial, forgetting all the sordid business. Joseph? Joseph was not the man to tolerate charlatanism. Well, then, who? His intimates who held the communal purse, the funds of the Baptists, Cephas, the former fisherman of Galilee, and Matthew, the ex-publican, and the whore of Magdala. They would keep up the imposture as long as there was money in it, a cheap fame. They undoubtedly! The moving of the dead upon the Sabbath would not bother them!

"So I have decided, Saul, when I go down into the darkness for our little child, if I cannot bring it back, I myself will not come back. For you have no need of me. And without a smile, a little love, I can no more live than a flower without the sun. Shall I stay, Saul? Will you give me a little sun?"

Her voice, appealing, rang across the starlight like the cry of a startled bird, of a small frightened bird, of a golden bird, caught suddenly in a fowler's net, and terrified, lest it should no longer have the air to cleave, the sun to sing under. Saul awoke from his reverie.

"Were you saying something, Nossis?" he asked. "I am sorry. I was not listening. I was thinking."

She was dumb as a bird who recognizes that the meshes of the fowler are something not to be over-

come, that no cries are availing, no beating of wings. She was dumb as a bird which will not sing again, nor fly. Saul, looking toward her in the soft darkness, felt a pang of pity. Her white face, her slight hands. Her face was chaste, as snow in the craters of Taurus, as white violets, as the first wild flowers.

"Are you tired, small Nossis?"

"Very tired, Saul."

§ 3

When she was dead, she and her dead child with her, when she was dead, Saul felt suddenly how lonely the house was, how lonely Tarsus was, how alone he was. Surely she could not have made all that difference? She had spoken very little. She used to sit on the roof, silently, so silently Saul didn't know she was there. Yet how he missed her!

His father he had found sobbing bitterly, a poor broken old man, all his dignity gone.

"I loved her. She was more a daughter to me than my own daughter. She was so merry. She understood so much. You didn't know her, Saul."

"I, her husband?"

"You didn't know her at all."

He would often wonder what was wrong with the house, and turn to Nossis to complain, but Nossis wasn't there. And he would sit on the roof, and try to bring back the quiet mood. Starlight would come, and the scent of jasmine was in the air, but the mood would not return, and he would turn to speak to Nossis, where she should be em-

broidering, and he would wonder impatiently where she was. And then he would remember, Nossis was dead.

He asked his mother one evening: "Was the house like this before—" he corrected himself—"when I came back from Jerusalem? It seemed to me so comfortable then."

His mother looked at him for a long time, and laid her hand on his arm. "Why don't you weep, son?"

"It is written," he answered her harshly, "'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'" And he looked at his mother fiercely. But he often said to himself, "If I had known she was going to live for such a little time, I should have been kinder to her, I should not ever have rebuked her, if I had known," he said, "if I had only known."

He was glad when a secret messenger of Jonathan, the High Priest, came from Jerusalem, with a mission for him. The Levite was a smooth-shaven, gray-eyed Sadducee, looking more the merchant than the priest.

"The High Priest," he said, "has sent for you on the urgent recommendation of Caiaphas.

"Because you are the youngest of the Sanhedrim, Saul, the youngest by nearly a score of years. The others are frail men. You alone have got the youth and vitality.

"For stamping out the sect of the Nazarene. With fire and sword stamping out the sect of the Nazarene."

"But he is dead, the Nazarene."

The priest smiled. "Every day His sect increases. All of Johanan's followers have joined. The Treasury of the Temple is in danger. The Corban is neglected. There have been young priests of the Temple who have sold their property to turn it over to the Nazarene's common purse."

"What is property to me?" Saul said. "I find no wrong in these things."

"The God of Israel, Rabbi Saul, is a strong god, a god of battle. It is written," he intoned in his quick Temple singsong, "'I will slay the last of them with the sword.' But the god of the Nazarenes is a mild woman's god. And the love they preach and practise is the ancient pollution of which it is written: 'I am broken with their whorish heart.' . . ."

"How then?" said Saul. "Are there more gods than the One God?"

"The Nazarenes hold their Jesus as a god, as the son of God, a god Himself."

"Why has this not been stamped out then? What have you been doing, you priests, you Levites of the Temple?"

"Ah, it is not so easy, Rabbi Saul. We arrested Peter, and the chief heads of the sect in Jerusalem. If these men draw converts to them by love, they govern by terror, too. There was a pair, Ananias and his wife Sapphira, who offended in some wise against the rules of the commune. They died, Saul. How, we do not know, but we think by sorcery. When we imprisoned Peter and his stewards we found them free the next morning. There was no

sorcery there." The priest smiled bitterly. "They said the Angel of the Lord had delivered them. But I know the angel of the Lord. It was some of the Temple police. Rabbi Saul, we can trust no one. Even Gamaliel—"

"Gamaliel!"

"Gamaliel counseled their enlargement in the open senate of Israel."

Saul was walking up and down the room with short crisp steps.

"Rabbi, there is none for it but you. You are a Hellene, and behind you is the whole power of the Libertine synagogues. And also you are known as a Pharisee," he added shrewdly, "so that they cannot call this a Sadducean prosecution."

"What powers should I have?"

"All powers the High Priest can give you, and, behind you is the Sanhedrim, Caiaphas. Pilate is gone home in disgrace over the Samaritan riots, and Vitellius, you know, never bothers in religious affairs. He knows better. He knows what trouble Pilate got into over the affair of the Golden Shields."

"I have made thy face strong against their faces," quoted Saul to himself, "and thy forehead strong against their forehead. As an adamant harder than flint had I made thy forehead!"

"He was a good man," said the priest, "a good man, that Nazarene, but a great fool. He should have stayed away from Jerusalem."

Saul turned and looked at him. The priest grew cold. In some way the grave young rabbi had changed. His gray eyes were cold and threatening

as steel. Under his cloak the priest saw with surprise the sharp muscles of his back. He noted the firm wrists and the closely cropped head, and the bronze of the sunburnt neck. He was like a storm that would break sometime with heavy black drops, and swirl of wind, and crash of lightning.

"Priest," he said quietly, "are these safe words before the sword of the Sanhedrim?"

"I did but quote, Rabbi Saul, what some say in Jerusalem."

"Quote it not, then," Saul ordered. "If you wish to quote, quote then: 'Hear, O Israel, our God is One God.'"

"Caiaphas," the priest reflected in terror, "Caiaphas and Jonathan sent me for a hunting-dog, and I bring them a savage wolf of the plains."

CHAPTER VIII

§ I

“**G**ET thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come unto the land which I shall show thee,” the old man was saying, picking each word carefully, walking carefully on words as through a dark place, full of obstacles in the darkness. “Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.”

The very silence of the council made it harder for Stephen to speak. They were around him in a semi-circle, with the ominous silence of judges. They sat cross-legged on crimson cushions, the barefooted priests, the Sadducees in robes of purple embroidered with gold, scribes and lawyers. Pharisees in shining white. In the middle of the circle was Jonathan, the High Priest, his small eyes, his heavy blue jowl, his fat, moist hands, his pouting purple lips. There near him was Annas, with his red-rimmed eyes, his treacherous face. There was Gamaliel, with his grizzled beard, his calm, untroubled eyes; Johanan ben-Zakkai, drowsy with learning; the rich Alexander; the fop Theophilus; behind the High Priest, the cold, ascetic face and the horned blue bonnet of Caiaphas.

"Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph," Stephen went on. "The same dealt subtilely with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born—"

Saul, seated near the door of the hall, looked at the whole scene as though outside, as though he had nothing to do with it. In the council itself the old men stole occasional glances at the immobile figure in white, with the Arab shawl bound with a fillet of camel-hair about his head. So that was Saul, eh? Young Saul of Tarsus, whom the Christians feared more than the devil himself. They nodded in approbation of the statue-like figure, and turned again, their gouty hands cupped about their ears, to hear Stephen fight for his life:

". . . saying: Sirs, are ye brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?"

Except for Caiaphas, the cold and cruel, whom he respected, and Gamaliel, whom he loved, and the prisoner himself, the white-haired clean old man with so much dignity, Saul felt a strange contempt for the whole proceeding. Stephen was to die. An enemy of the Temple and an enemy of Judaism. Every one there wanted him to die. With Stephen dead, the whole cult of the Nazarene would collapse, so Saul judged. What was the use of the whole preamble? But no, the old men must justify themselves. They must have one battle of wits before the end, pitting their combined learning and dexterity against one poor man. The craft that had tricked honest Pilate into trouble with the Samaritans was

now leveled against this itinerant Nazarene. Why don't they let me take him out and have done with it? Why all this farce?

He had to admire the closely knit chain of thought by which Stephen was adducing his position, reviewing Jewish history and tradition and leading up to his point. It was exactly as he would have explained it himself, Saul thought. Also, it was all wasted on these Palestinians. Straight thinking was unknown to them. They could twist a point of Mosaic law into a thousand subtleties, and lose all sight of Moses. Even in this affair of Stephen they couldn't take the man out straight and execute him as an enemy to the state and religion. The furtive Temple police had to give evidence for hire. Saul could see where Stephen was reasoning toward. The police had deposed that he had spoken against the Holy Place.

"Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground."

What Saul could not understand was how a man like Stephen, with Stephen's keen mind and good face—his face was shining with goodness—see it now compared to the heavy, lecherous jowl of Jonathan—could be fool enough to take for master the Nazarene, the son of the whore, and some unknown Greek soldier—Panthera, wasn't it, the gossips of Galilee had mentioned? One so versed in Judaism and the knowledge that God was One, to believe in the resurrection of this Jesus. A foulness of the pagans, Adonis worship. And as for the be-

lief that the Nazarenes now had, that Jesus was begotten by the High God on the body of a mortal woman, was not that the same idolatrous story as of Jupiter and Leda, of Jupiter and Europa? How could Stephen believe it? Saul supposed the keen mind reasoned logically up to a certain point, and then went whir! like a defective potter's wheel, some weakness of band or tread. It was a pity to put a man to death for what was minor madness. Yea, but his madness and the madness of his kind wrought more evil than homicide, than the homicides committed by a legion of six thousand spears.

Stephen faltered a moment. He looked about the circle of the hierarchs sitting there, quiet as wolves that await the setting of the moon. He took a square of linen from his girdle and wiped his brow. Saul could see that his lips were dry. Stephen looked up through the little windows of the hall, and saw the yellow sun.

Outside it was warm, the sunshine yellow as a melon, and around the Temple was the throaty cooing of the doves. From the women's court below the windows some female pilgrims from Phrygia, some of the women-folk of the *amme ha-aretze*, the men of the earth as the Palestinians called them, were singing their native hymn of the delivery out of Egypt:

When I was a minor
In the palace of my Father,
Enjoying the riches and abundance
Of those who brought me up,
From the East, our home,

The parents having equipped me sent me away.
From the riches of their treasures
They supplied a burden,
Great and yet light,
That I alone could carry it;
Gold is the burden from the country of Ghilan,
And silver from Gazah,
And chalcedon stones from India,
And pearls from the land of Kosan,
And they supplied me with a diamond,
And took off my garment wrought in gold, and jeweled,
Which they had made in their love,
And the cloak as yellow as gold,
Which answered my size—

The woman's golden voice, full of trills and grace-notes, hushed the throaty music of the doves. He would never more hear a woman's voice raised in music, would Stephen, Saul thought with something near a pang, nor see the mellow sunshine or hear the Temple doves. And there was probably more heresy in the Phrygian hymn than in all Stephen's teaching, the hymn being secret and dark as poison. Yes, because he was open, Stephen must die.

"This is that Moses"—Stephen raised his right hand and spoke firmly—"which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear."

Ha! they were getting down to it now. Stephen was coming right out in the open. There was to be no quibbling. Right here in the heart of the San-

hedrim he was going to preach the Nazarene.

It seemed to Saul that most of the aged assembly were blotted out. The venal police, the burly men who would do the stoning, porters, butchers, when not on duty. The wheezing, aged scribes. Of all the gathering there was only himself and the prisoner, and Jonathan, fat-handed and purple-lipped, savage, representing authority; Caiaphas, cold, cold as the nethermost pit of hell; Gamaliel, bothered, troubled in his brow. The rest, the sweaty old men, what did they know of the burning flame of the Most High God? That dotard, with his false teeth of camel-bone hanging loose in his violet mouth! Annas, with his little shops in the Temple courts where they chaffered for doves! This old Pharisee, who had covered the stains on his white cloak with chalk. All these were blots on a big scene. Saul wiped them from the screen of his mind.

"Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet," Stephen pronounced passionately. "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?"

He paused for an instant.

"Hath not my hand made all these things?"

The small pig's eyes of Jonathan narrowed in wonder. Stephen had said nothing against which action could be taken. Gamaliel nodded his head. The others, following the lead of the great teacher, began a buzz of conversation. Was not this Greek a pious man after all? Had he not courteously ad-

dressed them as "brethren and fathers"? Had he not spoken of the Most High—blessed be He!—as the God of the Shechinah, the God of Glory? Any patriot might listen with delight and pride to this man. Was Saul of Tarsus wrong? Maybe this man was a good Jew? Saul was young. They buzzed and gesticulated. Only cold and silent and aloof was the ascetic face under the horned blue bonnet of Caiaphas.

Under the speech Saul saw the inner meaning. Stephen had shown clearly that covenants made in Ur and Haran and the bondage were independent of the Temple. In speaking of Moses he had shown secretly that always had Israel been false both to Moses and God. He had proved himself guiltless of blasphemy against the Temple. If he had said the Nazarene would change the Law of Moses, he had proved out of Holy Writ that Moses himself had said his laws were only provisional, and that another prophet would come. That he should accept the Nazarene as the prophet of whom Moses spoke, was not against the Law.

"He goes free," Saul thought.

Stephen had been silent a little while, his head bowed. Now he raised it, and swept the assembly with a look of passionate scorn. His voice rang out like a trumpet.

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost"; the contempt in his voice was like the hissing of whips. "As your fathers did, so do ye.

"Which of the prophets have not your fathers

persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One"—his left hand shot out in accusation; his eyes were bitter with contempt—"of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers—"

So foul and ugly was the clamor in the hall that it seemed to Saul hardly out of the mouths of beasts could such a babel come as the screeching of these old men. They showed their scant teeth in snarls. They leaned forward with their bowed backs. Their hands in the air became like the tensed talons of birds. Before them Stephen stood, straight as a spear. Saul sat like some Roman statue. Not a muscle twitched on the cold face of Caiaphas.

Stephen threw out his arms wide, and for an instant the shouting ceased. Stephen's face had taken on the white of snow or the white of death. There was an unnatural light in his rapt eyes.

"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God—"

They cried out with loud shrill cries against him, and mingled with the passion of anger was the note of fear, as though they dreaded that the blasphemous words might call forth the lightning that might rive the Temple to the living stone. They shut their ears and howled as dogs howl. And some reached down to their feet as though they might find stones there, but finding none, arose and shouted the louder. Over his shoulder Jonathan barked one swift phrase to Caiaphas. Caiaphas rose and looked at Saul.

Saul walked forward and touched Stephen on the shoulder.

"You are to come with me, Stephen," he said.

"I come, Saul."

They went out of the Hall of Squares into the Women's Court, scattering the pilgrims, who ran from them with shrill cries. Like foul water from a pipe the graybeards gushed through the portals after them. A burly man laid hold of Stephen's cloak.

"Hands off, offal," Saul ordered, "in God's house."

Stephen walked beside him, taking no note of the sun. For an instant Saul feared Stephen might think he was going to prison.

"You know, Stephen," he said, "where I am bringing you?"

"Yes, I know, Saul," the older man smiled; "you are taking me to where I shall fall asleep."

§ 2

It seemed to him, Saul thought bitterly, that Jerusalem was an ungrateful place. The elders of the Sanhedrim seemed to fear him not a little. The Sadducee party still held it against him that he was a Pharisee, and the Pharisees were not any too grateful to him for putting down a movement which threatened the Sadducee priesthood. When Saul spoke to Gamaliel, the old teacher carefully avoided the subject of the Nazarene. He spoke of this thing and the other thing, gave news of Onkelos, who, it seemed, was writing a great commentary on the Septuagint. "Though of commentaries we have

enough, God knoweth," the great teacher said, and related an anecdote of his grandfather Rab Hillel, who had said: "What you yourself dislike, do not to your neighbor. This is the Torah. Everything else is commentary." The splendid old mind was clean, unruffled as a lake, and Saul enjoyed talking to the great teacher.

"You were always my cleverest boy, Saul," the old man said. "First, I was bothered about you because I didn't think you were sincere. I thought some gaudy thing would catch your eye and you would follow it. Once you loved applause, Saul. Now you care nothing for it. You are too sincere, too hard. If Onkelos had some of your hardness, and you had his gentleness! My two boys!"

"Rabboni," Saul laughed. "Onkelos would be of little use in my work."

"Saul, did your wife, this little Nossis, make no difference to you?"

"I don't know, Father Gamaliel," Saul said; "she was so soft and pretty and good, and though dead, I think she endures. But it was the mating of the gazelle and the dog, for that is what it is revealed to me I am, Father Gamaliel, the hound of God. And now"—he rose and tightened his leathern girdle under his white tunic, and reached for his heavy, snake-like whip of camel-hide—"I must go and hunt my rats." He bent and kissed the old man's hand.

"Saul, Saul, be gentle. In gentleness is happiness."

"Rabboni," Saul said, "if these rats are not hunted down and burned out, and their nests destroyed,

there will be no students in your school. And worse than Cæsar's shields, the foul Golden Thing of the desert will be raised above the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. You are the vessel of a tradition which has come from mouth to mouth, unwritten, from Moses himself. To whom, on your death-bed, will you pass it on, if these Nazarenes wreck the Temple?"

"If it is God's wish it shall endure, it will."

"Ah, Father Gamaliel, you have been so long with your scrolls and your pupils, you do not understand. Look," he said with sudden passion, "do you think I like this work? These burning houses, these screaming women, these fights in the synagogues, these ragged wretches flung into the Temple cells. And that old man last month who had the courage to face all of us! Shall I ever sit on the roof of my house in Tarsus again and have peace come to me from the sea? I—" He turned and walked out abruptly.

It would have been intolerable, Saul thought, had it not been successful, this inquisition of the Nazarenes. Now that Vitellius, the new procurator, was so much in the shadow and Agrippa, the new king, was so eager to make a good showing as a pious Jew, the Temple had supreme power. Into every house Saul would go, questioning the inmates as to their allegiance to the Law. The small children were asked to recite their Shema: Hear, O Israel, our God is one God! And they liked the big man who sat on the cushions of the house surrounded by Temple police and Roman guards. They played with

his whip while they lisped: Hear, O Israel, our God is one God! And they could not understand why their elders stood white and trembling by. They could not understand the evident terror in the home while this man asked his crisp questions. What did the householder feel about the Sabbath? Did he refuse dues to the Temple treasury? Was it on account of poverty, or did he feel justified? And then the big man's crisp voice would become soft as silk, soft and supple as Chinese silk.

"What think you of Jesus? Whose son was He?"

If the answer were, He was a rogue and a fool, and the son of Miriam, the woman's hair-dresser, by one Joseph, a Nazarene carpenter, then Saul would rise and say, "Peace, brother!" And the patrol would pass along to the next house on the list. Occasionally a white-faced, trembling man would face the grim inquisitor, and say: "I believe he was the just one, the son of the Most High." Saul would order: "Take him along." And the Temple police would bring out their lengths of supple chain. Sometimes there were heartrending scenes, the women, too, crying out that they believed in the Lord Jesus, and clinging to their men-folk. They, too, had to be apprehended. But the worst of all was the sobbing of the terrified children. Some of them would run at Saul and strike at him with their puny hands, wondering why this strange man should come in and wreck their home.

It was different when a meeting of Nazarenes for their agapæ or love-feasts could be discovered. There they were celebrating the founding of their

sect, blaspheming against the worship in the Temple, and as far as Roman law was concerned, plotting against the safety of the Empire. The house was surrounded. There was a short rapping on the door. "Open, in the name of Cæsar!" Then the crashing of rams against the door. Inside they would be found huddled together, their ceremonial feast on the floor before them. Or there would be no lights, while they awaited the coming of the Spirit, as they called it. When Saul entered, for all their fortitude he could see a terror in their eyes. Sometimes in a panic they would extinguish the lights, if the lamps were lighted, in a vain endeavor to escape, and the room would be filled with the hissing of the whips and the screaming, the sobs and groans, as the mailed forearms of the soldiers were driven against the jaw and mouth. Then a torch was lighted, and the wretched congregation bound with chains and dragged or driven to the Temple cells.

These were only the meaner sort of believers. Another matter to be fought was the subtle, seductive reasoning in certain of the synagogues where some of the able Hellenist converts argued, such as Lycomedes of Smyrna, and Berus the Ephesian, both Roman citizens against whom the Sanhedrim had no power. The only way of dealing with that was by filling the synagogues with Pharisee zealots, students in the main, and Temple police disguised, creating a disturbance, and having the speakers mobbed in an artificial fury. Unfortunately in the Cyrenian synagogue, a Babylonian student, forgetting that he was there against the Nazarenes alone,

sought out a Sadducee elder, and, in the crush, drove his knife hilt-deep into the man's groin, killing him. Caiaphas was bothered at this.

"You must keep your pack in better discipline, Saul."

"It was an accident, Father Caiaphas. Besides he had no business there. He went there to see Nazarenes beaten and perhaps killed. I can't say it bothers me."

It irritated Saul to hear Caiaphas make any criticism of his work or his methods. He had done so well. Not only by hunting the smaller Nazarenes like rabbits, but by his policy of letting the Apostles, as they called themselves, go free. It hurt the elder men of the Nazarenes more to be unmolested while the humbler ones were ravaged than if they had been persecuted with fire and sword. They were helpless. The humbler believers had looked to Cephas and James for protection. They knew that angels, so they believed, had preserved the elder men in time of stress. Why did not Cephas and James send angels for them? Saul had made it a point to be studiously polite and affable to the Nazarene elders, when he met them, and instructed his lieutenants to be the same. When the Nazarenes went by with averted heads, they stood seemingly puzzled and shocked at the incivility. Already doubts were in the minds of the followers of Jesus as to whether or not Cephas and James, John and Matthew and Thomas had not secretly made peace with the Sanhedrim. It seemed queer. . . .

And now that he had, almost single-handed,

broken up the most dangerous sect the Temple had ever seen arrayed against it, Caiaphas had dared to criticize him. A sudden gust of anger shook him from head to foot, so bothered him that he could hardly see. In Tarsus it was impossible to make him angry, but here in Jerusalem, and especially in the last few weeks, these savage emotional fits of anger raked him.

"No," he repeated, making his voice very calm, "the death of Demas of Jericho does not bother me at all."

"Ah," Caiaphas smiled, "there spoke the Pharisee."

"In all Jerusalem," Saul said quietly, "in all Judea, there is no man more hated, more misunderstood than I. If the Greeks are persecuted, it is said: See, it is one of yourselves, a Greek, who did it. If a Jew of Palestine, it is said: Saul is a Roman citizen; how far the procurator is in this none knows. To the Pharisees I am a renegade, for the Sadducees a Pharisee of the Pharisees. To each and all, I am of a party, but you know"—his gray eyes blazed into the blue eyes, cold and blue as ice, of the priest, and he spoke to him as equal to equal—"you know, brother, that I do this only because I know it is right. And the Nazarenes are the only ones who credit me with sincerity. Party, friends, advancement—" he laughed scornfully—"were Gamaliel, my old teacher whom I love, to worship the Nazarene as the son of God, or you, Caiaphas, I would have you in chains in five minutes. I would arrest Jonathan, the High Priest of the Most

High," he said, "in the threshold of the Temple."

"You take it too heavily, Saul. You are overwrought. None values you more than I do, my brother, my son." He took his arm and led him into the inner rooms. "Here is some one to take your mind off it all. Anna is home from Cyprus."

"What Anna?" Saul asked.

Caiaphas looked at him curiously. How single-minded, how high-hearted this man was! He, too, Caiaphas, had been like this once. Eh, that was a long time ago—before he recognized that single-mindedness and highness of heart got you nowhere. Yet he felt a pang.

"Yet you and Anna were such friends once."

"Ah, now I remember."

He went forward into the inner room to meet her, tall and erect, his silken white head-dress floating in the little draft of the doors. He raised his right hand to his sunburnt forehead in the sweeping Syrian greeting, his black snake-like whip dangling from the thong at his wrist.

"Oh, Saul," she said, "you have forgotten me."

She was standing up, her hands by her sides, her head a little forward, as in meekness, showing her flame-colored hair that, after a dozen years, was still a wonder. Her mouth was a little narrower. There were no lines in her forehead, nor about her eyes.

"You haven't changed, Anna."

"And you, Saul, you have become a great man. And I am still where you left me, so abruptly, without even saying good-by."

He looked at her. In her face there was nothing

but a cold sort of semi-beauty. Not a line, not a feeling. Yes, he said, she was where he had left her, with no defeats or victories in her brow, no depths hollowed in her heart. A woman who had been too much a coward, or too selfish, for life.

"You married, Saul."

"Yes, I married."

"Did you love her, Saul?"

She spoke to him as though she were as close to him as she had nearly been, as she probably thought she had been, a dozen years ago. It was to him such a wide distance.

"As much," he said, "as it was in my heart, I think, ever to love any one. You, Anna, you never married."

She had turned away from him. She had turned deliberately, so that he could not see her face. And her voice was harsh.

"I never—never cared to marry."

"Yes," Saul said, "many people are like that. I thought myself as one. Even when I married I thought I never cared for marriage. But now when I look back on my poor little Nossis, it seems to me as if I had been traveling through a country whose fairness I hadn't noticed, and now it comes back to me, trees, gardens, gentle rivers—"

"How very interesting!" she cried abruptly.

The interview trailed off uncomfortably, Saul wondering how he had ever, even as a callow boy, been attracted to this cold, empty woman, and she discovering a vein of hatred in her to this man whose cruelties she had heard about, and now believed in

fully. Epileptics were always cruel, weren't they? He had probably been cruel to his wife.

So that Saul was surprised, a few days later, to hear that he had asked for the hand of Anna as a reward for his work against the Nazarene sect, and been abruptly refused. He never even bothered to contradict it. More gossip of barracks and bazaars!

§ 3

He had gone down to Jericho to investigate some rumors of a Nazarene feast held there on the second anniversary of the so-called resurrection of Jesus. The Judean uplands were gay with spring, and in the distance the mountains of Moab were blue as blue cloths. As they wound their way down to the Dead Sea, half a company of Roman soldiers and half a dozen of the Temple police, the air grew heavier. In the distance the Dead Sea seemed like a molten pool, like a pool on which Tubal-Cain, the instructor of the artificers, might work. The resinous scents of the palm-trees came to them in the torrid heat, the palms and fig-trees. The grackles, the black birds with gaudy yellow wings, screamed from the rocks about them. Afar off they could see Cypros, Herod's tower, rise like a menace, and beside it was the flash of water in the great cistern, like the flash of steel. The Hill of Leeches the Arabs called that place, and avoided it, asserting it was haunted by evil ghosts. The town itself, for all its riches of spices and fruit, its flashing white houses, its gardens, had a lack of dignity about it. It seemed

to feel it was always a coin to be flipped in the air. Joshua had cursed it, and the curse, it seemed, had remained until this day. All its fertility, its gardens of roses, its date-bearing palms, its henna and spices, were a temptation to all. Pompey had plucked it like a ripe date. Its inhabitants had fled into the desert at the tramp of Vespasian's troops. Mark Antony had given it to Cleopatra, a harlot's hire, and she had offered it to Herod as a bribe. . . . A great disgust for Jerusalem and all Judea was coming on Saul. They were a worthless lot, he said to himself; there was no iron in them. And, looking at his escort, he noted the difference between the men of the cavalry detachment and the Temple police. The soldiers were small hardy Italians, bronzed, exceedingly masculine, proud of their standard, ready to fight until they died, because they were Romans. The very horses they rode had a Roman arrogance. The Temple police, riding their asses, had a look of effeminacy about them, their huddled figures, their white faces, their curling greasy side-locks. That heavy-looking boor, with all the knowledge of the world's evil in his eyes, and this dandy with the over-eager air! Pah! He longed for Tarsus and the Greeks. Of course, the men of Jerusalem had brains which the Roman soldiers had not. The servile dandy could put on the meek look of a Nazarene, and knew all the Nazarene tokens, where the outlines of the drawn fish might be found that might lead to Nazarene congregation. He knew all their grips, signs, and passwords. "I don't know, brother, if you're on the way—?" dropped casually

in conversation, and the waiting for the invitation to try and prove. Every grip and sign he had, and was as cautious as the most fearful Nazarene in the lettering or halving of a word. He could progress from slope to slope of the mountain, as they worked their instruction, until he arrived at the Summit, where the Sermon was preached. Then he had them—Disciples, Apostles, and Brethren of the Lord. It was clever, tremendously clever, but was it dignified? The Roman soldier would not worm his way into an Upper Room, and betray the men who had treated him as a brother. Nor could Saul do it himself. . . . Still, Saul sighed, it had to be done.

The young Roman officer and he, on the way down to Jericho, had been discussing the Pythagoreans, who had now a tremendous following in Rome, hosts being initiated to their mysteries every year. Their instruction, so the soldier said, and so Saul knew, was that the soul was the mirror of the world, everything one saw, did, or heard being reflected on it, until all was a chaos of perception. By asceticism and by instruction all these disturbing elements were removed, until, grade by grade, one came to the point where one saw, dimly, that the soul was connected in a mysterious manner with nature, or the universe formed after the scheme of the soul. "In the highest degrees," the officer had said, "it is taught that man can do what he likes. Outside himself is no moral law, nor anything."

"What? Live entirely without religion?"

"Many do, sir, and live very decently. Myself, if you will excuse me mentioning myself, manage

not so badly. Of course," the young man laughed, "many relaxations of mine you would consider sinful: a tankard of wine in the evening, a fair-haired girl, a hazard of dice. But I serve Cæsar truly, and I do not think I could betray a friend or any one for the matter of that, or flee in battle, or hurt children or horses. To me the gods are symbols of natural things, nothing more. And another life, sir, will either mean inaction to me, which is distasteful, or more war, of which, though it be my occupation, in one life I shall have had enough. To live decently in the hope of golden life, or in fear of hell-fire, like one who on one hand can be bought, on the other hand can be compelled, is rather vulgar, don't you think, sir?"

"We live," Saul said sternly, "to conform to the will of God. All else is vanity."

"Would you, Rabbi, if your God were taken from you to-morrow, become debauched, traitorous, an untrustworthy man with money? I think not, sir."

"The God of Israel is eternal," Saul told him. "It is revealed: Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God."

"That may be," said the subaltern, and he looked from Saul to the Temple police. He looked with all a soldier's contempt for the tricky. "But what makes you what you are, sir, is that you are a free-born Roman and a Greek of Tarsus." And he cantered back to the squadron humming a Roman song:

Let us love, Lesbia, while we live;
And value all the sour advice
That the croaking baldheads give
At a copper penny's price.

Suns that set again will rise;
We when once our golden light,
Once this dear day with twilight dies,
Sleep in one enduring night.

So give me kisses . . .

At Jericho the police ferrets could find nothing, but the government of the town told Saul that across the Jordan in the desert were hundreds of Nazarenes, who had fled from the jurisdiction of the Temple into the realms of Aretas. Their condition was appalling, the Roman said. They had no money, few tents, and only such food as the Essene monks on the eastern shores of the Dead Sea could give them, and such supplies as went across the Jordan to them. They wandered in bands in the desert, waiting for their Messias.

"And you allow supplies to go to them?" Saul asked coldly.

"Why should I stop their food? I feel sorry for them."

"They are enemies to Cæsar."

"Enemies to Cæsar! Immortal gods!" the governor laughed. "You are doubtless a good man, Rabbi, and a pillar of the law, but can even you think that this crazed rabble could bother a single

Roman outpost? You know nothing of Rome, Rabbi. Why," he sneered, "do you Jews fight so much together?"

Saul was livid with anger. His right hand clutched his heavy whip until the leather stuck to the palm. He leaned forward and tapped the governor on the knee with the handle.

"I am a Doctor of the Law," he said, "a member of the Sanhedrim; a Roman, born free; a citizen of Tarsus. My name is Saul of Tarsus. You may have heard it before. Now who are you?"

"I beg your pardon. I hadn't known—" The governor evidently had heard the name before. "But in Arabia you cannot touch them."

"Can I not?" Saul was furious. "Look you, Governor. From King Aretas himself at Damascus I shall get permission to hunt them back into Judea. I shall hunt them right back through the streets of your town. And look you, Governor, that there is no hindrance to us, or succor for them. You are not under Pilate now. We smashed Pilate. Do you think a small official in a small town will withstand us?" And he walked out, still livid, from the governor's house.

He rode down the Jordan, thinking that he would start soon for Damascus, bringing powers from the new Kohen ha-Gadol, Theophilus, to Aretas, the Arabian king. Now that Antipas, his son-in-law, reigned no more, but was in disgrace and exile, the Arabian monarch had shown a desire to be friends with his neighbors in Jewry; and surely he would not refuse his consent to the extradition of the here-

tics, particularly if it were shown that they were dangerous, insidious fellows, subversive of his monarchy. Also there would be a chance of haling the Essene abbot before the Sanhedrim. There was a little too much of the rule of the Lord Buddha about these monasteries for strict respect of the Mosaic Law. Behind Saul was the jingle of the Roman cavalry as they trotted, and the cries of the police as they urged their donkeys to a canter. Suddenly, at a turn in the palm-bordered road, Saul came on a caravan of five camels, stepping along lazily on their spongy pads. A small Arab boy was urging them with a driving-stick, and behind them rode an elderly fat man on a mule. Under the green boughs that protected the loads, Saul thought he could see supplies of provisions, glistening fish, and loads of dates and vegetables, and bags of flour. The old man was cleanly but poorly dressed, and from the look of his back was vaguely familiar. Some almoner of the Nazarenes doubtless, whom he had seen in Jerusalem, bringing supplies across to the desert.

"Halt there, such a one!" Saul cried. "Where do you go?"

The elderly man stopped his mule and slid off. He came to meet Saul, waddling a little on heavy legs.

"Well, Saul, was you after me, too?"

The wheezy, beloved voice affected Saul with a sense of calamity. He felt afraid, afraid of he did not know what.

"What are you doing here, Uncle Joachim?"

"Don't you know?" the old man smiled. He

shouted to the boy: "Go ahead, you. I follow you, maybe, a little later."

"I can't let that stuff go."

"Yes, you can. Look, who are you talking to? Come down off that horse till I smack your face. Amn't I your Uncle Joachim, that dandled you upon my knee?" Saul dismounted, and the old man's arms were about him, and there were tears in the old man's eyes. "Oh, Saul, my boy! My little nephew Saul!"

"Uncle Joachim, I can't believe it—"

"Oh, look at the soldiers!" Uncle Joachim's voice had its old bantering tone. "And oh, *fui!* look at those fellows." He was watching the Temple police. "Oh, look at that fellow!" He pointed out the dandiacal ferret. "Don't you look at me," he told him. "I'm a Roman citizen."

"Shall I send the men back, sir? You won't want them any more to-day?" the young officer asked Saul. He was looking at him queerly.

"Do," Saul answered.

"Ensign, take the troop back to barracks. And take these fellows with you, too." He pointed with his short riding-whip at the police officers. "Don't let them wander, will you. I'll stay around, sir," he told Saul. "I don't think you're looking any too well. I'll be up the road if you want me." And the escort moved away. Uncle Joachim was still holding Saul's hand.

"Come under the palms, Saul," he said. "Come and sit down in the shade. My dear, you look-at a sick man."

He threw the irons across Saul's saddle and picketed the horse. The mule stood lazily flapping his ears.

"I am just perturbed, Uncle Joachim. You were always more to me than any one I ever had, my father or my mother even. You understood always."

"Surely. Surely," said Uncle Joachim. "Don't I understand it now? Don't I know that you think you are right? Ah, you are changed, my little Saul! You were a gentle, dreaming boy, and now—" The old man's face had pain in it. There was a subtle difference in it, too, Saul noticed. All the sophistication had gone. The shrewd look of the eyes had vanished. There was a sort of shining peace in it, and Saul wondered where he had seen that expression before. He remembered Stephen.

"You are changed, too, Uncle Joachim."

"Ah, my dear, we are both changed. But we love each other, don't we? That is not changed. Nothing will change that ever, little Saul. Look-at!" he laughed through his near tears. "What an old fool I am, I call you little Saul! And you are bigger than me."

"It's good to be little Saul to some one, Uncle Joachim. I was to—some one, and I didn't know I was until—she was gone."

"Yes, I heard." He patted Saul's hand comprehendingly. He seemed to understand that Saul couldn't talk of it. But Saul felt sympathy running toward him, through the silence.

"Uncle Joachim," he said at last, "you know, if you wish to help the Nazarenes there is no need

to do it in disguise. You are a Roman citizen and free as air. The Council has no authority over you."

"What disguise?"

"As a poor man."

"What the hell do you mean, disguise?"

"Uncle Joachim, you don't mean to tell me you've given away everything?"

"My dear, in the days when I bet on the Roman races, I never played them one, two, three. It was bang on the nose of one mule to beat the field. What was good enough for racing ought to be good enough for religion," said Uncle Joachim.

"But don't you miss things?"

"Miss—hell—nothing! In the old days, I was a worried man. The more you got the more you worry about. Now I got nothing to worry me. When I gave anything away, it was set off against some dirty business I had pulled through. The only thing that bothers me," said Uncle Joachim, "was that I intended the money for you, Saul, when my days were done."

"Dear old uncle and friend," said Saul, "money means nothing to me. You thought it was right, and you did right."

"Well, that's good," said Uncle Joachim. "There spoke my boy, Saul. My dear, I knew you'd understand."

"Tell me," Saul asked, "if you don't mind telling me, did you know Jesus of Nazareth well? I knew you'd met him. But did you know him in the latter days?"

"I knew him," said Uncle Joachim. "I met him

here in Jericho, and I met him in Capernaum, and I went to him the day before he was executed. I knew that Caiaphas had found one of his followers who would identify him—that was Judas bar Simon. And I told him about it. I said: ‘Look-at. I’ve got two horses outside, and in five hours we’ll be in Arabia or on the road to Egypt, or anywhere you like. Only come. Hell,’ I said, ‘what’s the use? You can preach just as well in Alexandria or in Arabia as you can here.’ And he smiled and he said: ‘You don’t understand, my son.’ ‘Look-at,’ I said, ‘if you’re afraid they’ll take you in Alexandria or Arabia, come across to old Abgarus in Edessa. He’ll fight to his last man before they’ll take you. It’s a small place, but you’ll be welcome.’ He smiled again and said, ‘No.’ So I shrugged my shoulders and went out. Pilate did his best, too, to save him.” Old Joachim shook his head. “Saul,” he said, “you hear it that Jesus was afraid to move that day. That he was paralyzed with fear, like a rabbit before a snake. Saul, there was no man less afraid. He knew he was for it. We could have got him away. He wouldn’t go. But I tell you this: Jesus was not afraid to die.”

“Who do you think he was?”

“I don’t know,” said Uncle Joachim. “He may have been the Messias. Honestly, Saul, I don’t know.”

“Did he come back?”

“That also I don’t know. I hear, and say nothing, and I don’t know. Maybe he didn’t. If he did, well, I was nobody. Why should he show himself to me? Honestly, Saul, I don’t know.”

"Then why do you follow him?"

"Because he was so good, Saul, and because he was so wise. The wisdom that Solomon prayed for, he had. He looked through all the coverings of things and of hearts as if the coverings were glass. And he was good. Saul, I have heard about goodness all my life. I have heard Antipas talk about it. He knew a lot about it, because he wasn't it. I have heard the High Priest talk about it, two weeks, Saul, after he had bribed himself into the post. But I never saw anybody who was it until I met Jesus. I can't tell you what it is even, but he was it. It came from him to you, if you wanted it, and it stayed with you. Listen, my dear, I will tell you a secret. You never thought it of your Uncle Joachim, but I was afraid, afraid of old age. A man who has wandered all his life, my sweetheart, and must stay infirm in a cold house without wife or children, but with only people who are waiting for him to die! Friends who are happy with you in wine are no friends. And women suffer to love you, thinking only of the gift at the end. It is being like a lone tree in winter weather. And death! God of Israel, Saul, I used to be so afraid of death. Of the coldness coming over you while you are still alive, and you cannot fight against it, and a darkness creeping about you and none to bring lamps. And they take you and put you away in the cold loneliness of the tomb, and go on singing and dancing. That was most terrible of all, that people should sing and dance when you are dead. . . . Now, I shall not be afraid."

The old man got to his feet.

"Now I must get along to my starving ones. A hungry belly, my boy, takes few excuses. And, my dear, mind yourself. Look-at, don't put too much trust in Caiaphas. Take a tip from the wise. I know him. My darling, you think the Nazarenes hate you; they don't. They forgive you everything, because you think it is right what you do. Hell, Saul, if you was in trouble to-morrow, a Nazarene would be the first to help. God of Israel! Isn't that what we're here for? But look-at, my boy, look out for Caiaphas. Listen, did you hear the riddle that Summas the Sadducee put to Caiaphas: 'A certain person got him a watch-dog to protect his house, and put him in a kennel, but the dog drove the certain person to the kennel and occupied the house. Now, read me it, that conundrum, Caiaphas.' Caiaphas said nothing and Summas laughed mean. Well, my boy, I don't need to tell you what the riddle's about, or that Caiaphas does not like to be laughed at. But mind them in Jerusalem. Before to-night, my dear, that ferret-snouted informer is going to tell Caiaphas that you met me, and we talked together. In Jerusalem they would be glad to see your end.

"And now kiss me, Saul, and go. It may be the last time I ever see you, my dear. These are bad times. I'm not wearing green boots and Damascus cloaks embroidered with gold. So that they might stab me first, and find out I was a Roman citizen afterward. My little Saul, how much of my thoughts in this world have gone to you, you may never know. Take care of yourself. God bless you!"

Saul noticed, when he caught up with the young

Roman officer, that the soldier, with a swift glance at him, turned his head in embarrassment. He put his hand to his face for an instant to shield his eyes from the sun, and when he took it down he noticed dully that his palm was wet.

He would be glad to get out of Jerusalem, for many reasons. In the first place, his work there was nearly done, and if it were to finish round Judea, he would have to get permission from King Aretas in Damascus to arrest the refugees in Trans-Jordania. Politics in Jerusalem was wearing. The whole air of hypocrisy and distrust was beginning to prey upon him. Certain Romans, children of settlers there, and certain of the wives of Roman officials, who had been hesitating about accepting the doctrines of the Buddha, had become Nazarenes, and as they were now Jews, however sectarian, and so, valuable national assets, their friends and congregations must be treated with respect. So long as they did not openly proclaim Jesus as the Son of God, or profess the doctrine of the dissolution of the Temple, they were to be treated with latitude.

"I cannot see," Saul told Caiaphas, "why there should be one law for the powerful and one for the poor."

"Your mind is not very expansive, Saul," Caiaphas smiled, bland.

"It's expansive enough," Saul said bluntly, "to distinguish right from wrong."

Caiaphas and Theophilus were eager to give him letters to the Arabian king. "In Damascus your zeal for the Law will have full scope," Caiaphas told

him. "Indeed, I shouldn't be surprised if you stayed there altogether." Saul felt this was a hint they would be glad to see the end of him in Jerusalem.

"I shouldn't mind very much," Saul said.

Another reason he would be glad to get away was the reason of health. He had for a long time felt oppressed and bothered, flying out into savage rages on the least possible provocation. But recently his eyes, or rather not his eyes, but his mind behind his eyes, was not as well as it might be. For a week now, queerish attacks had come on him. First, there would be a swirling of orange lights before his eyes, and the swirling lights would resolve themselves into a face, or rather the small seeming of a face, small as the smallest coin. A delicate man's face, with sweat of agony on it, with a mouth twisted in pain, and reproach in the gray eyes. He had never seen this face on living man, but it was familiar to him. It seemed to him that it was a composite face of the Nazarenes whom he had seen in prison or under the lash, or looking at their burned homes. There was a little of Stephen in it. . . . He would see the face against the scroll he was reading, or against a wall, or distinctly against the face of the person he was talking to. He would close his eyes to get rid of it, but there it stood out from the darkness, until he opened his eyes again. He would say to himself: That's strange! But after a while it became tremendously irritating. And when he lay down at night to sleep it was there, so that he would have to get up again and light his lamp, and walk about his room, or read. He would sit down again and say,

I must conquer this, and look at the face that was like the smallest golden coin, trying to identify it. Then it would move along past his eyes out of his vision. And he would say: That's finished. But he had hardly uttered the words before it was there again.

He said to himself: The air about Jerusalem is not wholesome for me. It never was. And he thought the journey to Damascus, over the uplands, past snow-capped Mount Hermon, and Damascus itself, with its rivers singing like birds, its gardens of peach and almond trees, its wealth of flowers, would cure him. I shall be all right, he said, once I depart from this foul town.

He thought, too, with a smile, that there was coming back a little of the sense of adventure of his youth, when he stood on the quay of Tarsus, and thought of the islands of the Greeks, Cos of the mill-stones, Chios the grape-fertile, Eubœa splendid with violets. Like little silver bells they had rung in his heart; but now Damascus, Abraham's city, the oldest city in the world, called to him with the soft deep tone of a golden bell, of a cunningly cast bell of ringing gold. Jerusalem was heavy. The shadow of the Temple was everywhere, the Temple of the Lord of Hosts. One felt the hosts in the air, the menace of their bucklers and their spears. And everywhere rancor festered like a seething pot. Oh, it would be good to get away for a while, Saul thought. The little rivers running through the town, cool as snow, and losing themselves in the desert lakes. Fig-orchards and apricot-orchards, the trailing

vine, and the pomegranate-blossom and the shining walnut-tree. Frail almond-branches and a wilderness of roses. Surely there would be rest there. Through the streets walked the peaceful, silk-clad folk, down the great bazaar which is called Straight, the Darbel-Mustakim. In the midst of it rose the great temple of Jupiter which had once been the House of Rimmon.

The merchants of Damascus would not have the modern look of the men of Tarsus, or the dour distrust of those of Jerusalem, but sit quietly, peacefully, waiting for buyers for their gaudy saddles; their swords of steel supple as whips, inlaid with waves of silver or of gold; their strings of great amber beads; their vials of rose-essence. And from the desert that lay between the city and Babylon, men would come with strange stories of marvels to be told in the bazaars, as of the great dead serpent Poseidonius had seen, a plethron long he claimed it to have been, and of such a bulk and thickness that men on horseback could not see one another from its opposite sides, and the scales of the skin were larger than a shield! And he would meet the Indians there who followed the Buddha, and discourse with them; and Arab thinkers, who held the true religion as far as Father Abraham, and thence had lost it. They accepted the unity of God, but rejected the Law of Moses, and accepted Aristotle as their teacher. They dreaded the loss of poverty more than the rich man dreads the loss of wealth, and they believed they could attain an ecstatic union with God. . . . Perhaps, Saul thought, perhaps after talking

with them a little while, one night of Damascus, of the risen moon and the murmuring river, he might feel what he had not felt since Tarsus, a rising out of himself, and a cleansing, and a sense of God. Such a cloak of turmoil was about him now, so many tears, such a whirlwind of terror and cries, that he knew it was impossible. But there it might fall away. And he would have strength to go on with his work. As he thought of his work he passed his hand across his forehead and once more saw the weary, wearisome face, the stricken, eloquent eyes, the dumb, twisted mouth.

"Agh!"

He set out himself and his mounted guard in the dawn, when the Temple trumpets were sounding, for he intended to ride to Neapolis in Samaria that same day. The last star dropped from the sky, and beyond Jerusalem the mountains of Moab were scarlet with the rising sun. The ravines near the city changed from gray to a soft green. The dim shadows of dawn were in the city, but the birds were singing, and a bee went swiftly down the city street.

As he rode toward the Damascus Gate a woman came swiftly out of the shadows toward him. She was clothed in a wide green cloak that was caught about her, and a fold of it was about her face. There was a dignity to her walk that spoke of breeding. For a moment Saul's heart sank. He was afraid it was Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas, come to bid him farewell. A soldier stopped her.

"Let her come," said Saul.

"May I speak to you, Rabbi Saul?" Her voice

was dignified and clear. There were strength and surety in it, and a melody to it. She dropped the fold of her cloak from her face, and Saul's features, which were frowning in irritation, became hard as granite.

"You know me, Rabbi Saul."

"Yes, I know you," Saul answered. "You are Mary of Magdala. If you have information to sell, go to the Temple police. I don't deal in that merchandise."

"I have information for you, Rabbi Saul, but it is not for sale. Nor is it what you expect. I do not betray my brethren."

"What, then, can you have to say to me?" His voice was cold, cold as winter.

He looked at her with surprised hostility. When he had thought of her, he had thought of her as some cheap, pretty woman, with oiled hair and darkened eyes, with eyebrows darkened and mouth made scarlet by art, her walk a provocation, her face loosened by debauchery and wine. But she was dignified. Her face was calm and peaceful, her symmetrical Greek face; and her gray eyes were clear as water. Her body, big as a man's, might have served for a model of Diana, so graceful, so powerful it was. Saul recognized that here was no love-sparrow of the gutter, but a hetæra such as the Athenians honored, a woman who attracted with her mind and grace; with her patter of Greek philosophy, Saul sneered. . . .

"What have you to tell me, woman?" he repeated harshly.

She confronted him with her proud bosom and her fearless eyes.

"This," she said in her grave Syro-Chaldaic speech, "that the Lord Jesus was not—" she hesitated a moment before uttering it, as though it were a fearful thing to say— "was not my lover, Rabbi Saul."

"Why should he not be? Love between a charlatan and a harlot! What is less important?"

"It is important. If it were not, your party, Rabbi Saul, would not spread it abroad, making him cheap. Rabbi, though you are cruel, you are upright. You would not traffic in lies."

"No," Saul said, "I will have nothing to do with lies."

"He was above it," she told Saul. "I know love. I know it, the dark and white." Her face was calm, beautiful. Five and thirty years had only given her strength and dignity. "In the dark love, you turn from God's sunlight and clean flowers and chaste trees into a hot evil place, because of some evil you have invited into yourself. And in the white, Saul, your heart is high and singing like a bird's, and the man you know is like some new country you have discovered, where everything is sweet or great. The very highness of your heart betrays you." She made a gesture of futility with her white shapely hand, unstained by henna, unadorned by rings. "It ends in tears, or disappointment, or cheapness. He was raised above all evil and cheapness. He had love that one dreams of in the quiet hours of God," she said. "Not for beautiful faces and splendid bodies

alone, but for faces sweating with pain, and for twisted bodies, and for all things that needed love. Oxen galled by the yoke, and overladen donkeys, and birds in the fowler's net."

"Who was this man"—Saul's question was to himself, more than to her—"who could fool such as you?"

"He was the veritable Son of God," she answered calmly.

"Ride on," Saul shouted in the dawn-lit street; "ride on. I will hear this woman no more."

The escort clattered out through the Damascus Gate, the shoes of the horses knocking sparks from the flinty cobblestones. The officer, looking backward over his shoulder, saw the glory of sunrise strike the Temple, making it into a vision of white and gold, porphyry and marble and golden roof. In the quiet unawakened street, quiet as some flower at dawn, quiet and lovely the Magdalen stood, and the officer thought, with wonder, that more beautiful than the Temple was her face.

§ 4

Before them were the barren hills of Judea, gray, forbidding in the fullness of the day, but now under the early sun pink as sea-thrift. The gaudy tents of the pilgrims, picketed camels and fat-tailed sheep, and here and there was a flash of silver on the rocks where a lizard adventured into the sun. Here and there were dwarf trees, lulab and citron and small olive, and a lark sang high in the air, but the bees

adventured little here, for there was little for them—an anemone, perhaps, set like a jewel, or the barren poppies called rose of Sharon. Eastward, where Jordan joined the Bitter Lake, the birds were clamoring over their morning meal, grackle and crane and red flamingo, taking bream and pike and perch from the lake where they had died on leaving the sweet waters of Jordan for the accursed fluid of the accursed sea. They went onward, and from a hill-top Saul thought he glimpsed for a moment the Mediterranean, a flash of white in the distance; and a great homesickness came over him. For an instant he thought of deserting the mission, of riding on to Joppa, and taking ship there for Tarsus, and on the quiet roof of the weaver's house forgetting all. There the Sanhedrim could not bother him, and, indeed, the empty title of Sanhedrist appealed to him no more. He thought of Cydnus, the beloved river of his youth and manhood, with the swans on it, stately as great ships, and the red flamingos fishing in the shallows and the pelicans wandering inward from the sea. All Tarsans longed for the Cydnus, Saul smiled to himself, remembering that a bitter Athenian had said that the Tarsans got drunk on it. But he had gone too far from Tarsus now. One cannot break up one's life and go back to a year before.

"No! not to two days," Saul said.

"Were you speaking, sir?"

"I was thinking, officer, of my home city, Tarsus, and of the peace there. But there is always peace in the scenes and days of your youth."

Tarsus was a nice city, the officer murmured agreeably. He was a man going on for fifty, with a deeply furrowed brow, and a trimmed brown beard shot with gray, more a thinker than a soldier. He had been in Judea fifteen years. Rome had evidently forgotten him, and he was a disappointed man. Quietly he told his life-story to Saul. His grandfather, a Gaulish princeling, had been brought captive to Rome by Julius Cæsar, and his father had been a diplomat of some distinction. He knew Tarsus, he smiled, because he had passed through it going to visit his brother who was now dead. His brother, a soldier of promise, had been addicted to wine, and was facing ruin on account of it, but had taken a cure in the temple of Asklepios at Ægæ. But when he returned to Rome he had to face the alternative of avoiding all his friends or of drinking with them. "He thought life without friendship a cold thing," said the officer; "so he had friendship for a little while, and then he died. My brother might have been a great general officer, but, *diis aliter visum*, the gods had other plans."

They dropped down the winding hills into the fertile Samaritan plain, past the gullies where the panthers and bandits lurked; but the panthers were quiet in the daytime, and the gleaming lance-heads of the Roman soldiery made the bandits keep closer to the undergrowth. They went through groves of olive-trees that were like a sea of green. Saul put his hand before his eyes.

"That face! That face!" he said.

"What face, Rabbi?" asked the officer.

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" Saul said quickly. But the soldier looked at him shrewdly. He had known of the mission of Saul, of the death of Stephen, of the campaign against the Nazarene church. He himself had had unpleasant duties to carry out in Greece and in Cœle-Syria; he knew how pictures would remain on the screen of the mind. . . .

"Perhaps you are overworked, Rabbi," he suggested kindly. "Perhaps at Damascus you might turn over your mission to another, and go and rest in your native city. There is a great peace, as you said, sir, in the scenes you knew as a boy. Something of your boyishness remains there."

They passed by fields of cassia and sugar-cane, and the soft scent of it came to them like a caress. The thundering of the wild doves, and the bees' song, and the warmth of the sun. It seemed like some dream of paradise, but a hyena snarled from the roadside, and, coming near Shechem, a colony of lepers shouted to them from the hills. They were monstrous. Their faces had become like the faces of mastiffs. They thrust forward their stumps and moaned piteously. Saul tossed coins on the ground for them. But there appeared from behind a rock a naked, silver man, with a spotted face, and he mewed and spat, so that the horses took fright. A soldier reached for his hunting-bow and looked at his officer.

"No! no! poor wretch," the officer shook his head. "And yet they say, Rabbi," he uttered bitterly, "that your God is good."

"It is written: I form the light and create dark-

ness," Saul quoted, "I make peace and create evil: I the Lord."

"Folk weary of gods who create evil," said the officer. "That is why Buddha and the Nazarene get so many followers."

They passed through Shechem, where Jacob and his sons stopped for four years on the way to his father Isaac at Hebron. The Samaritans crowded close to the escort at the sight of the young Pharisee rabbi and spat curses and insults at him. But Saul took no notice. They passed Mount Gerizim where the Samaritans' great temple, the rival of the golden house in Jerusalem, lay in ruins. They went on to Esdraelon, the fertile.

§ 5

It seemed to Saul as they rode along that never had he felt, never had any one felt, so terrible a weight of oppression and doom. The green plain lay about him, the corn the sweet blue of blue seas, the silver line of the paths, the villages white as mushrooms. His eyes saw nothing of this, or rather saw all this vaguely, looking through it as through a mist into a vast darkness within himself. The white path, the green fields, the jingle of harness, the stilted Greek of the officer, seemed all illusion, and the only reality the darkness within himself, a darkness more terrible than death, for in death was quiet. And unquietness possessed him. It seemed to him, such a weight was on his back and neck, that he was staggering under the dreadful T-shaped

gibbet of Roman justice. And, again, he would feel there were two motions, the quiet jogging of the troop, and within him a furious onward motion, as though he were racing in an arena, in some ghostly, hellish race, though whether he was horse or rider he could not tell, but both were possessed by terror. A vain thought came to him that he was in a dream out of which he must awake or die, and seeing his left hand before him holding the reins he brought the butt of his whip sharply on his knuckles.

"Easy, Rabbi, easy," said the officer.

"I was just wondering if I were awake," Saul said shamefacedly.

"Exactly," said the officer, and watched him the more closely.

It came to Saul, out of some shred of occult philosophy, that the fear and oppression which haunted him now came out of the ground over which he was passing. The splendid flowers, the fertile corn of Esdraelon, sprang from the bones and marrow of slaughtered men. Here was slaughtered the first-born as an offering to the earth by the men of Canaan. Here Babylon and Egypt met shield to shield, Sisera and Barak. Here Jehu, who drove furiously, slew of Ahaziah's household two and forty men. Out of the welter of blood at his feet the shapes of men dead in anger, dead in fear, rose and gripped at Saul's soul. Here was Tabor, tall as a great spear, threatening as a spear, where the tribes of northern Israel used to gather for war; crowned like a spear, for at its top, above the wolf-trodden, panther-haunted slopes, the spear-head of a Roman garrison

glittered in the sun. . . . When they passed over the short heath of the mountains, the hills of Bashar dropped behind them. And suddenly below them they could see the flash of Lake Gennesaret, and the white temples of Sepphoris. . . .

"Had you not better see some Greek physician?" asked the officer.

"No!" Saul said. "I shall be all right now. It was just—fancy."

In Tiberias he did feel better. The cool Galilean lake, murmuring on the shingles in the night-time, helped him to the first night's sleep he had had since he left Jerusalem. The breeze shimmered in the soft walnut and fig and palm trees, and even the sight of the pagan Acropolis, and the Roman ships of war, gave him a feeling of home. It was like the dream of some city-builder, this Tiberias, with its marbles and gardens. He slept thankfully, seeing that after to-night they would have to bivouac in the Syrian Desert. In the morning he was greeted by the blue sea; and on the way to Capernaum, as they rode along the oleander-bordered road, there burst on Saul's eyes, a pillar of silver and gold, Mount Hermon, gold slopes, silver snow at its summit; "the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus," Solomon had called it. . . .

When they crossed the Jordan and entered the wilderness it was as if they had entered into a barren, accursed land. Vast boulders, as if left over from some battle of Titans, covered the bleak plain, cinders, the soft dust of lava that was from before Abraham. Now and then they passed a Syrian flock

obtaining sustenance from God knows what source, weak camel colts, and goats, and a few sheep guarded by shepherds more timorous than their flocks, who fled on swift ponies, leaving their vast wolf and boar hounds to guard the flock. And the heavy whips of the cavalcade had to scream through the air to keep them off. Here and there were dwellings for the shepherds, half underground among the boulders; and their women came and gaped open-mouthed, dirtier, stupider, than the camels they owned. The sun became a cruel obsession. Turbans of camel-hair were substituted for the leather helmets, and masks of camel-hair were worn over the back of the neck. It was like the blast of a furnace. Heat smashed down from the sun. Heat rose from the ground. Heat swirled about them like water in the baths. At night the soldiers huddled together for fear of the silence, and kept a wary lookout for wolves and vipers. Their small bivouac fire was a merriment to the stars. . . .

For a brief hour of the morning the day gave promise of being fair, and, though ten miles to the northwest, Mount Hermon, by some illusion, seemed not a stone's cast away. The summit, proud with snow, was like a mockery of Tantalus in the heat of the morning, and swimming fair as a lake, the green groves and white houses of Damascus hovered before their eyes, with its white villages about it, like ducklings about their mother. So close it seemed that it was like a city in a dream, and Saul gave a cry of wonder.

"We shall be there in an hour." But the officer shook his head.

And a soldier laughed. "Shelook!" he said, using the Bedouins' term for the Syrian storm.

"If we ride hard," said the officer, "we may get there before it breaks."

But the horses were difficult. They whinnied and rolled bloodshot eyes, and it needed whip and armed heel to keep them in formation. The troopers rammed their lance-butts into the leathern sockets. The ensign whipped the cover from the winged horse that was the standard of the squadron.

"Forward! trot!"

Hot puffs of wind followed them northward, evil as snakes. They struck their backs with the light blows of cats' paws. They came regularly as single blows on a great drum, as insistent, as nerve-shattering as the beating of a giant drum. A hyena galloped past them, snarling as he went, and a great black snake crossed their path with powerful sinuous movement. Mount Hermon disappeared. Afar off a village showed no longer white, but gray. And they saw in the distance the trees bend like a drawn bow.

"If we can win there," the officer shouted, "we'll be all right. Cover your mouths."

The wind slashed and whistled like a whip. Little stones were snatched up from the desert and flung at them as they rode. They were like hot cinders where they touched. The horses broke from their trot into an uneasy gallop, their sides foaming. The

soldiers threatened and cursed: "Hold up, mare! Hold up, Elephæa! Ho, would you, damn you!" Around them in the distance a ring of black iron formed. An old camel, turned into the waste, tottered by them, moaning hideously. There was no more sun, but the wind passed over Saul's back, hot as iron from the furnace.

The sky changed from lowering gray to black; and against the background of the air, the face that had tortured him for weeks stood out now in horrible appeal. The hot, poisonous breath of the desert choked him. His eyes were burning sores.

"Surely hell is not more terrible than this," he gasped, tearing the head-dress from about his mouth. And looking into the blackness he saw Stephen on the ground, kneeling, sinking into sleep. And turning from that a seeming of Nossis came to him, wild-eyed, running toward him as if to help.

"O brother," Saul cried out, "God has loosed spirits on me. He has opened the gates of brass, and smitten the bars of iron in sunder."

The officer fought his way against the wind to Saul's side, and caught his arm.

"Hold up, Rabbi, hold up. We are not yet dead."

"I am worse than dead. I am mad."

Above and about them the horizon was deep violet. Above the roaring of the wind there was the jagged sound of thunder. Little flashes like flung javelins went through the air. The horses turned, pulling madly, rearing. Saul's mount gave a shudder and sank to its knees.

"Leave me, brother, and save yourselves. Don't stay with me, for I am accursed."

"Leave! Hell!" shouted the officer.

The sky closed in like the sides and roof of a tent. There was a crackling in the air, like thorns under a pot for sound, but that got under the skin and tortured each twisted nerve. Lights shone, little round balls of light, at the lances' heads. The winged horse of the ensign was like a lighted lamp, and under it one could see, in the light, the ensign's face, white and set as the face of a dead man. Wet drops, as of poison, swirled through the darkness and stuck their faces. The sky fell swiftly. Then, with one vast, outrageous crash, the world ended.

§ 6

It seemed to him when they picked him up that all his old life had gone from him, and that he was weak now as a babe new from its mother's womb. He heard the voices about him, the stirring, but he could see nothing.

"Are you all right, Rabbi?"

"Yes," Saul whispered.

"Here are your reins."

"I cannot see."

"Try!"

"I cannot see. I am blind."

He could not stand, so, gently and silently, they put him on his horse and led him onward. Within himself he was asleep, and what had happened he

was too tired to know or to remember. Later. Later. The life that was in him seemed vague, apart from him, something lent him, but not his. Gently the sun was warm about him, but it did not feel as if it were his body that received the warmth of it. The scent of rain-washed gardens came to him, and as they entered Damascus, the sound of the singing goldfinches came to his ears. But they were not his ears, but just ears. "I am not dead," he told himself. "I am not dead. I exist. But within me I sleep." He was as if watching a man who experienced these things, the Asiatic smell of the town, half perfume and half sweat. The tinkling of the camel-bells; the shouts of the wine-sellers: "Oh, raise thy heart!" Everywhere was the murmur of the stream the Greeks called Chrysorrhoas, the river of gold. The hoarse shout of the officer of the guard, as he cleared the rabble of the curious before the escort, came to Saul as to another man. "Ho, sons of whores, give way. See! A blind man cometh!" And the voice of his own officer asking: "Hail, brother! Say, where lies the house of Judas, in the street which is called Straight?"

CHAPTER IX

SHOULD it be Tarsus or Jerusalem?

He sat in the shadow cast by the great pyramid which Chembes the Memphite had built, and watched the Nile flow past the fields of barley and beans. The Arabs with whom he had crossed the gulf, landing at Berenice, had gone on their trackless way across the great desert toward the Pillars, steering their path by the sun by day and the stars by night, after the science of Chaldea. And here he had parted with them, thinking to go through Alexandria toward Tarsus. He had thought of his home-coming to Tarsus, of how they would receive him, whom, after three years, they must have thought dead. He was browner, leaner than any Arab, from his years in Babylon and Petra. In the eagle-faced, rugged-looking Bedouin chief, there were few who would have recognized the former member of the Sanhedrim, Saul of Tarsus, who had fled out of Damascus from the Jews he betrayed there, and was dead in the desert, or by robbers, or by the long veiled hand of Caiaphas—who knew which?

He felt himself, in the cool Nilotic morning, strong and supple within himself as a sword in its scabbard. For three years now he had lived by his own hand, as a teacher of Greek and Hebrew, as a maker of sails and tents, at anything he could turn

his hand to, on the Euphrates, or in Arabia. He felt himself equal to any physical emergency, except that now and then his eyes bothered him. His attacks of falling sickness were no longer severe, lasting a couple of seconds now, or a minute at most, so much benefit had come to him from a quiet life and lack of excitement. It had done him so much good those three years when he grew in strength and marshaled his thoughts, hewing away his early education until only the spirit survived, as the Greek statue emerges from the marble block, comparing this belief, that so-called truth, with his own scheme, rejecting, rearranging. The knowledge that the day he came within dagger-reach of the Zealous-for-the Law would be his last day, had kept him quietly in Arabia until he imagined he was forgotten. Then one morning the thought came to him, as he was sewing on a fore-sail in the loft at Bassorah, that he must return to Tarsus; and putting down his needle and palm-guard he had joined a caravan that was crossing Arabia. The Arabs had liked him, as it would seem all Gentiles did, the sheikh of the caravan, a great lover of Aristotle, and he having many arguments about religion.

"Ho! Thou who art young!" the sheikh had asked him; "is it not unlawful for Jews to kill a flea on the Sabbath?"

"All that is past, Uncle," Saul answered, "for we have now a new prophet who put aside the law of Moses." And he told him of certain parables and sermons of Jesus he himself had heard in the country house of Ananias in Palmyra, when he was re-

covering from his breakdown, before he had gone back—like a fool, he told himself—to Damascus to be chased by the Jews. He told him of the Messias' simple prayer.

"This seems to have been a good, simple man."

"No better, no greater ever lived," said Saul, simply.

"Did you know him, my son?"

"I don't know, Uncle," Saul said. "I met him, whether in the body or out of the body, God knoweth. He came to me in my great distress and fear, but whether it was an illusion or not, as I said, God knoweth."

"The body is an illusion," said the sheikh. "You met him, my son. What happens to yourself, outside yourself, and is good, is never an illusion. Where is this man now?"

"The Jews hanged him for blasphemy," Saul said bitterly. "He went up to Jerusalem, and they hanged him."

"That was very wise and brave of him," said the sheikh. "For a prophet grown old is a prophet with the fire gone from him. And the young men will not follow him, for the young distrust the old, my son. But a prophet who dies young is a hero, and his teachings endure. He was a wise man, this Jesus. Tell me more."

And Saul told him all he had learned of the young Jewish prophet who was hanged while he was staying in Ananias' pleasant house. And speaking now, all that sweet month came back to him—the month of wonder. There were days of fevered delirium

in the house of Judas, when the Greek and Arab physicians shrugged their shoulders and pulled their beards; he could not see them, being blind, but their presence and personality scratched on the thin membrane of his mind. Three days he had lain there in agony, until on the evening of the third day the old Nazarene healer had come to him. And when he laid his cool hand, cool as the rivers of Damascus, on Saul's head, Saul knew peace.

"Who are you? Who sent you?"

"Brother Saul, I am a certain Ananias, of Damascus; and the Lord, even Jesus, hath sent me."

"I knew some one would come."

All the fever, all the agony went from him, and he was just weak. He felt light as an almond-blossom in the air. He had passed, he imagined, through some cool river, never to be repassed; and on the other bank lay his old self, discarded as old clothes are discarded. All his pains, all his mistakes, were on the far bank. And he would not have to pass the river again.

"You must not think. You must just rest, Brother Saul."

A quick burst of tears came to his tired, blind, inflamed eyes. He had felt so alone in the vast universe. And to be called "brother," and to be tended so skilfully by one of the sect he had done so much to ravage!

"They are good, those tears!" said Ananias. "They are better than ointments and sponges. Soon you will see."

He was surprised to find, among the Arabs and

Greeks, how high the name of Ananias was. A rich man, as riches went in Damascus, a rich man in fruit-orchards and flocks, but who spent most of his time and all his profit with the poor, giving them the inestimable benefit of his healing power. A Jew and a Nazarene, but the Nazarenes were closer to the Greeks than the strict Jews were. They held no fanatical views on the Sabbath, and their sacrifices were bloodless, as most of the Greek sacrifices were becoming. The slaughterings of heifer and lamb and small harmless birds smacked too much of African savagery for the civilized Greeks. They were so gentle, were the Greeks.

"Rabbi!" the Cretan handmaid in the house of Judas, who was fanning the sick-bed with palm-leaves, spoke to him tremulously; "Rabbi!"

"Yes, child."

"Rabbi, when you are well, you will not take Ananias back to Jerusalem to have him stoned. You will not kill him, Rabbi. He has been so good to you."

"No, child."

"The servants below said you would, Rabbi; that nothing turns you aside."

"God of Israel," he said to himself, "what a monster they think me! What a monster I have been!"

"Rabbi!"

"Yes, child."

"Two of the chazzans of the Temple of the Jews were here to-day, but Judas would not let them in. Ananias has forbidden you to be worried."

"They would flog a dead horse," Saul said bitterly to himself. "Child!"

"Yes, Rabbi!"

"I shall persecute none any more."

He could not see her face, with the bandages about his eyes in the darkened room, but he could hear the swift intake of her breath. And there was a kiss and tear on his hand.

"I am happy," she said.

"Ananias," he told the old healer when he came, "I can remain in Damascus no longer. They will be bothering me from now on."

"Then you must come to my place in Palmyra for a rest. Now, Brother Saul, I must look at your eyes."

For a month he had remained in Ananias' house in Palmyra, on the edge of the old Phœnician city, looking southward over the hazy Syrian Desert and the lakes of bitter salt. The little river that ran through the vast Temple of the Sun ran also by the edge of Ananias' garden, dammed, bordered by apple-trees, and populated by small golden-bellied fish. The chanting of the priests as they celebrated the rites of Helios, the sun-god, or their silence as they worked their mystery of Mithra, seemed not to weigh on the age-old city as did the rites of the Temple at Jerusalem. The Canaanite and the Greek and the Roman had possessed the city, Tadmor, which Solomon had built in the desert, to be a toll-gate for caravans. Here, now, Judaism was dead. On the tomb towers of Palmyra no name of Hebrew showed. Now Aramaic, now Roman, now Greek. "Thou art bound in brazen silence, Chry-

seomalkis, flower of mimes, and no longer dost thou figure to us the men of old time in dumb show. Now, prince of actors, is thy silence, in which we once took delight, most grievous to us." It seemed as if Judaism could not flourish where was worshiped the sun.

Northward from Syria and Palestine swung the caravans laden with olive-oil, with hides and grease bought from the Bedouin. Westward came the trains of camels from the Euphrates, laden with Chinese silk, with pearls from the Indian islands, with perfumes from Arabia Felix. A vast tumult and a shouting. The caravan from Persia had arrived. The gongs sounded in the Temple of the Sun. The Roman officials went quickly through the bales of merchandise, exacting toll. The dancing-girls in the Temple of the Moon went cool, and aloof, through the mazes of mystic steps, or spun until their dresses of fine linen stood as though held outward by a breeze. A night's tumult and no more; a filling of water-skins; a beating of drums and a wailing of shrill pipes; the glare of camp-fires about the town; and in the morning all was silent. The caravan might have been a dream but for the figures to the southeast as it went on its way to Damascus. Hazy beasts and hazy men against the dim desert line. There an instant and then gone. And Palmyra became an empty city, but for the Roman officers, and the prisoners working on the salt-marshes, men with gray faces and red-rimmed eyes.

Here on the edge of the oasis, in Ananias' house, all was peace and health. The little lemurs in the

garden and the tame gazelle, with its pretty, trusting eyes and legs graceful and delicate as a stylus, moved about, certain of affection and welcome. Always was there a breeze. When it came from the west, breaking on the high oasis, sometimes Saul felt he could distinguish the scent of the sea in it—not salt, for that might come from the marshes, but the odor of tar, and the indefinable life-giving scent the sea has. And sometimes, in the breeze from the north, he could detect the perfume of pine-branches, as though the breeze were coming down from the Taurus to Tarsus.

He was alone in the house there for two weeks while Ananias was in Damascus. All alone but for the silent, efficient servants. The wife of Ananias was dead, and his sons scattered. One son was a student in Alexandria, and another a physician in the Yemen, and a third a caravan leader whose headquarters were at Charax, on the Persian Gulf. His two daughters were married, one in Cyprus and one in Cæsarea. "Now I have none, Brother Saul, but all the world to foster."

The keen breezes and the rest, and the peace of the oasis, were curing Saul so quickly that the inaction began to irk him, when Ananias returned from Damascus, bringing with him a Nazarene friend. He was a huge, swarthy man, all but a giant, with clear brown eyes and the habit of merry laughter. So big he seemed that Saul was small compared to him, and Ananias seemed a frail old man. He complained cheerily that he had to walk most of the way through the desert, as no horse or mule was up to his weight.

"My name is Barnabas," he said, and he took Saul's hands. "I am glad you are better, brother."

Saul remembered, with a flash of shame, the name of the Levite of Cyprus who had turned Nazarene, and whom the Levites of Cæsarea had thrown into prison, but who was so strong that he had twisted the iron bars of his window and walked out. "A Samson come to life again," he had been described. "One of the Nazarene's bravos," Saul had sneered. "Catch him and fling him into a dungeon, and starve him for a month, and see is he a Samson come to life." The Temple police had missed him by a minute in Tiberias, where Barnabas had swum across the Sea of Galilee, while Roman and Greek cheered him and giped at the futile police officers. Saul had thought of him as an ignorant athlete, and here was a man with a kind, merry face, speaking his own native Greek.

"Shall we be friends, Brother Saul?" he asked.

"I sincerely wish it," Saul said. It had come into his mind when Barnabas held his hands that here was a man whom he would wish for a friend. But there was some prohibition in Saul that would not allow him to speak. And, moreover, how many of these Nazarenes believed in his change of heart? Could he blame them? They had been too often the victims of treachery. But something told Saul that Barnabas believed him. . . .

Sitting here, under the great pyramid, Saul thought that in all the three years of his wanderings his mind had turned to Barnabas more than to any other. And yet in all he had only known Barnabas

for five weeks. He felt also that Barnabas thought a good deal about him. Some links bound them, as though their lives were to run together. When he had returned to Damascus with Barnabas and insisted on accompanying the big Cypriote to the synagogue, it was only the presence of Barnabas which gave him the courage to face the Nazarenes. He felt he must go to their meeting-places, and show that there was no longer enmity between them. That, indeed, though he bowed his head in embarrassment, he was on the Way. But without Barnabas he would not have had the courage. And Barnabas risked the love of so many old friends for this new one.

It was Barnabas' beautifully balanced wisdom which had saved Saul's life and liberty in Damascus. When Ananias spoke of the Sanhedrim, Saul had brushed it aside.

"What can the Sanhedrim do to me? What can Caiaphas? What can Theophilus? I am a citizen of Rome."

"The Sanhedrim, Saul," Barnabas had said, "as you know yourself, works in the dark, and its arm is long."

"It daren't touch me. I am of the Sanhedrim myself."

And yet a few days later, as he was passing on his horse in the narrow streets of old Damascus toward the house of Ananias, a large stone had crashed from the edge of a roof, all but brushing his shoulder. Had it struck his head, it would have cracked it like the shell of an almond. Nobody ap-

peared to explain it. When he told Barnabas, the big disciple had looked grave.

"That is the last time you go out alone."

And well it was that Barnabas accompanied him. Three nights later the huge hand of Barnabas shoved him to the ground as they were passing the Temple of Jupiter. There was a hiss like a snake's hiss as the noose went harmlessly through the air. On the walls of the Temple were curses of futility.

"They'd have hanged you like a dog," Barnabas said cheerfully. "They'd have had you as high as Haman where I couldn't have got to you."

Saul felt a chill go through him, in spite of the warm summer night.

"As to the Sanhedrim," he said, "I'm afraid you were right, brother."

"Oh, they've only begun," Barnabas told him.

To Saul, Barnabas was a revelation. The great kindness in the vast muscular frame was wonder enough, but when disputing in the synagogue of the Damascenes with wily old doctors of the Law, he showed a knowledge of esoteric teaching, of the so-called science of reading prophecy from Scripture, which amazed Saul.

"He saith: Hear the word of the Lord, ye princes of the people. And again: Hear, O children! The voice of one crying in the wilderness.

"Wherefore he has circumcised our ears that we should hear his word and believe. But as for that circumcision, in which the Jews trust, it is abolished. For the circumcision of which God spoke was not of the flesh;

"But ye have transgressed his commands, because the evil one hath deceived you. For thus God bespeaks you; thus saith the Lord your God (here I find the new law), Sow not among thorns; but circumcise yourselves to the Lord your God. And what doth He mean by this saying? Hearken unto your Lord."

Stephen, Saul remembered, had been cold as ice, naked as a drawn sword, when disputing. But Barnabas had a charm about him, his smile, his easy voice, that even these hard-necked graybeards admitted. They nodded as he made point after point, the small smile of intellectual enjoyment on the wintry faces. But when their eyes met Saul's, sitting cross-legged and silent by Barnabas, their eyes were full of hatred. In the dim light of the synagogue their eyes were red and glowing like the eyes of wolves. There was the bitterness of death in their eyes. He threw up his head and returned look for look, until their eyes wavered and dropped, and they remembered not Saul the renegade, but Saul the destroyer.

"And again he saith," Barnabas went on, "Circumcise the hardness of your heart, and harden not your neck. And again, Behold, saith the Lord, all the nations are uncircumcised (they have not lost the foreskin); but this people is uncircumcised in heart.

"But you will say the Jews were circumcised for a sign. And so are all the Syrians and Arabians, and all the idolatrous priests; but are they, therefore,

of the covenant of Israel? And even the Egyptians themselves are circumcised.

"Understand, therefore, these things more fully, that Abraham, who was the first that brought in circumcision, looking forward in the Spirit to Jesus, circumcised, having received the mystery of three letters."

The graybeards leaned forward, all attention now. In the half-light of the synagogue, their hunched bodies, their pasty faces under the hooded praying-shawls, made them seem like the birds of some gray island of cold and fog.

"For the Scripture says that Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his house. But what, therefore, was the mystery that was made known to him? Mark, first, the eighteen, and then the three hundred.

"For the numeral letters of ten and eight are IH. And these denote Jesus.

"And because the cross was that by which we were to find grace, therefore he adds three hundred, the note of which is T (the figure of his cross). Wherefore by two letters he signified Jesus, and by the third his cross.

"He who has put the engrafted gift of his doctrine within us, knows I never taught to any a more certain truth."

Saul was too much the student of Gamaliel to be amazed by these intellectual gestures, and too much the Greek to put faith in them. He admired Barnabas when he extracted justification from Scripture, as a kernel is extracted from the nut. But he loved

him when he spoke exclusively to his Nazarene converts:

"All happiness to you, my sons and daughters, in the name of our Lord Jesus the Christos, who loved us, in peace. I also think verily that I love you above my own soul; because that therein dwelleth the greatness of faith and charity, as also the hope of that life which is to come.

"I, therefore, not as a teacher, but as one of you, will endeavor to lay before you a few things by which you may, on many accounts, become the more joyful."

In speaking to the graybeards he spoke from his mind, matching brain with brain as a weapon; but in speaking to his own, he spoke with his heart; and the heart, Saul knew now, was the only thing.

It was coming out of a small meeting-place of the Nazarenes that Barnabas saved his life for a second time. The big Cypriote and he were bidding farewell to some friends. A group of Arabs stood around watching with the vacant curiosity of desert men. Saul's hands were to his head adjusting his Arab cloth around his mouth, when Barnabas jerked him aside.

"Eh?" Saul asked.

There was the shrill tear of his tunic as a knife shore through it, missing him by a hair's breadth, and a grunt beside him as a man drove full strength with his arm.

"Ah! Would you?" Saul turned like a panther, and wrenched the man's wrist until the steel tinkled on the cobblestones. He looked into the sullen,

scared face of a young student he had often seen in Jerusalem. "Ha! You Temple rat, you would kill me, would you?" A crowd swirled around. There was the tramp of the Roman patrol. The boy cowered.

He looked at Barnabas. The face of Barnabas was impassive as a statue's, but Saul noticed that Barnabas had covered the knife that was glinting in the moonlight with his broad sandal.

"What's amiss here?" The officer of the patrol pushed his way forward. Saul threw his arms around the boy's neck.

"Nothing's amiss, officer. What should be?"

"Nothing, Rabbi?" the officer smiled. "Well, if you say so, I must take your word. Still, Damascus is not a wholesome place for you, Rabbi Saul."

"My health will stand it," Saul laughed.

Saul, with a push, sent the lad spinning down the street. "Back to your scrolls, boy, and learn that killing doesn't conquer."

"Well done, brother," said Barnabas.

It was two days later that Barnabas came to Saul with seriousness written on his brow.

"Listen, Brother Saul," he said, "I'm afraid there's trouble. You're to be taken."

"For what? What have I done?"

"You've failed to deliver state letters to Aretas in his own city. That is construed as an insult to the king."

Saul was dumfounded. He recognized the seriousness of the charge.

"The Sanhedrim's at the bottom of this."

"Of course."

"Then I'd better get out."

"The guards at the gates have orders to apprehend you."

"Then there's nothing to do but face it. Very well. I'll face King Aretas. And before him I'll preach the Nazarene as the Messias. I'll—"

"You'll not!" said Barnabas. "You don't know enough about him yet. You haven't thought enough. Ah, Brother Saul, don't misunderstand. None could do it better than you. Who has your learning, your courage? But not yet, brother, until you have thought and thought and made sure."

"Jail won't bother me," Saul laughed. "They can do nothing to me. I can call on Cæsar."

"No, no," Barnabas said. "I and ours brought you into this trouble. We must get you out. Will you stay within, Saul, until I return? Nothing will happen until they get a warrant from Vitellius, and Vitellius is in the Hauran, and will not return before to-morrow. Will you wait within?"

"Yes," said Saul, without spirit, "I will remain within."

The hush of noontide broke into the clamor of later hours, while Saul sat, bitterly thinking that here was another failure. What he had expected when he came back to Damascus, he didn't know, but at any rate here was an end of it. Prison and scourging possibly, or the ignominy of flight. Twice he had gone up to Jerusalem, and twice he had left it in disgust. And now, if Caiaphas had his way, he was to be dragged back, like a felon, to Jerusa-

lem. He had proudly boasted that his Roman citizenship would save him. But was the new emperor, Caligula, as keen to deal justice to his citizens as Tiberius? Foul monster as Tiberius was, he was a Roman to the core. And Vitellius, the procurator of Syria, was under the thumb of Caiaphas. He might be sacrificed to the vanity of the petty Arabian king, who, for all his protestations of amity, hated the Jews since Herod Antipas had put away his daughter. Aretas had all the vanity and treachery of the Bedouin. Damascus was so far away from Rome. Would "*Appello Cæsarem*, I call on Cæsar," reach so far? The old Tiberius would rise from his lewd bed at the call of the smallest of his people. But would the fop Caligula, "Little Boots"?

The swift dusk of Damascus rustled down like a curtain, like a curtain of indigo silk. The little breeze of sunset flew like a bird from Mount Hermon, and swept the orchards and the almond-gardens. Chrysorrhoas, the golden river, tinkled like a dulcimer through the streets. Like horses from the starting-place, the stars sprang out, and to-night there would be a vast golden moon, like those great coins the Indian kings struck of gold that had been stolen from the griffins. . . . In jail there would be neither the glory of the moon nor the glory of the stars.

Were he to stand up and front Aretas, and tell him what he thought he had seen and heard when the flood of lightning rolled over the ghost-haunted Syrian waste, what would they say? And moreover, he was not too sure of himself. He wanted a long time to think over it. But they would only say he

was mad. That he was noted from youth for being a victim of the falling sickness. But they wouldn't even believe he was sincere in madness. Already there was a story told in the bazaars, coming whence he knew not, that as a student he had asked for the hand of Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas, and been refused, and that when Nossis was dead, through ill treatment, he had come up to Jerusalem again, and after breaking the back of the Nazarene church in Judea, he had asked for her again and been refused, and in a fit of anger, had turned Nazarene himself. It was a clever lie. It satisfied the Jews, and it made the Nazarenes distrust him. And there was no way of stopping it, no way of combating it. Well, had they not manufactured, out of this small fact and that unrelated saying, a gross tradition for—for Rabboni Jesus? And even Saul, who wished to be just, had believed it.

The first golden edge of the moon had risen in the east when Barnabas returned.

"Are you ready, brother?" he asked. "To-night you must ride far."

"I suppose I must," Saul said, and went with him. The quiet of the Eastern town had come over Damascus. Only from here and there in the street called Straight came the little hammer-strokes on the dulcimers, and the plucking of the Egyptian harp from the booths where the soldiers and the Bedouins made merry with the dancing-girls from the banks of the Euphrates.

"Whither will you go, brother? To Tarsus?" asked Barnabas.

"Not to Tarsus, Barnabas. For there would only be danger, too, and trouble for my folk. Whither I go, God knoweth."

"It is written," said Barnabas, throwing his arm about him, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no ill."

"I fear nothing, brother, but my heart is low. That this should be the end!"

"This is not the end, Saul. This is the beginning. Here ends the mission from Jerusalem, brother. Now you are free."

The tramp of the Arab patrol came to them and the curt challenge: "Who are ye?"

"I am a Cretan," said Barnabas; "my name in the Greek tongue is Mnason."

"And the little one?"

"I am of Tarsus," said Saul, "and—"

"Are you of Tarsus?" the Arab captain asked, "We are seeking a man of Tarsus, a foul fellow and a most notable rogue, Saul by name."

"Why do you seek him?"

"He has insulted the good king Aretas, sir. He is also a spreader of sedition, a thief, and a traitor."

"Perhaps I am he."

"Oh, no!" laughed the captain. "You are a gentleman, and this fellow is a pestilent Jew. We shall find him hidden in some brothel. A fair night, sirs."

"They have lost no time; and, Saul, you had better be Paulus, the little one, from now on. It's not a bad name, Paulus."

"The not great, the small one, Paulus. It's a good name."

"Here!" and Barnabas pulled him into a doorway. He went ahead up the beaten earthen steps. They came into a wide upper room with a window looking on the blue desert.

"See, beneath there is a *hegg*, a racing-camel, Saul, held by one of the brethren, water-bags full, flour and dates packed. You must go now, Paulus, the little one, my little one"—he took Saul's hands—"before the patrol makes its rounds again."

Saul felt, standing there by the window, looking out into the desert, as though he were standing on the edge of the world looking out into space. He felt a little quiver in his vitals, the sense of the hunted man. Below he could see the black squatting camel, flat, from this height, as a tortoise. Above all was the moon, so clear, so near that one could see in it the vast seas the Chaldeans had discovered by their art, and the mountains that had once spouted fire, but were now cold and harmless, like blinded monsters. Around them the desert stretched like lake-water, like dark lake-water through which one could see the grasses and the reeds.

Barnabas was uncoiling a great stretch of rope and knotting a small basket to the end of it.

"You will put your feet in this basket, and hold on to the rope, and I will lower you down." He threw aside the light cloak and showed his vast muscular arms, large as a man's leg. "Come, brother."

"Barnabas," Saul said, "you are seeking to be free of me, are you? I am not unwelcome to you all, for see! it seems to me now I have no one in the world, nor any house to shelter me."

"Brother, you have always Lord Jesus the Christos with you, and my love and friendship. If it were not expedient for us to part now, I would go with you to the end of the world."

"Very well, then."

He swung out of the window and grasped the rope, moved his feet gently until they found the little wicker rest. "I have it."

"The grace of God go with you, Saul."

He came gently dropping through the air until his feet reached the ground. Quietly he walked across to the servant sitting by the picketed camel.

"Go not south nor east, Rabbi, but north. They have set guards lest you return to Tarsus, or go toward Egypt. Go north through the Lebanon," the camelman whispered.

Saul had the sleek black beast on its knees, was testing girths and water-bottles. He swung himself into the high Arab saddle.

"I shall go east," he said, "to Petra and the cities of the Decapolis; to the Euphrates; to the Roof of the World, perhaps; God knoweth." He brought the beast to its feet, and wrapping his shawl around his face, he looked at Damascus. There it stood, old as the world, secret as the tombs, yet it had not the wisdom to let him stay, he thought with a smile. The keen night air of the desert blew toward him, and of a sudden all the oppression left him, and a sense came to him that for the first time in his life he was free. There was no mission, no responsibility, no care. He was off, God knew whither, to ponder on a mystery. He flung up his left arm in salutation

to the hidden Barnabas, and with a flick of the nose-rope, and a cluck to his mount, he drove eastward under the immense silent oceans and blind volcanoes of the moon. . . .

And for three years he had pondered on this mystery, in the cities of the desert and in the cities by the banks of Euphrates teeming with fish, while he plied this calling and that, water-carrier, scholar, tent-maker, herd, submerging his learning and his Roman citizenship, and, as he told himself, learning humility. Little by little the mystery revealed itself, deepening, taking perspective, until he felt he had a possession and a power greater than the kingdoms of the world. In the coolness of the sail-loft, in the chatter of the class-room, in the porters' stands in the city squares, he clung to it. In indignity he grew dignity, and in weariness strength. The hardships of the desert meant nothing to him, the red seas of sand, the deadly scorpion, the swift snake. He pondered on it under the indigo night of the desert, loud with stars, in the evening when the zodiacal light tinged the edges of the world with green. He thought of it now, where the pyramids reared their vast futility, and the Sphinx, a toy to frighten the Bedouins away, flattened its thick negroid lips into its saturnine smile. Green Nile and green fields of the barley; the shouting of the Roman soldiers at their dice; the cry of the peasant as he drove his buffalo in its eternal round:

"Turn, O buffalo, to the right, working the water-wheel!

"What should become of us children were Father Nile to die?"

To the shrouded figure by the pyramid of the painted king, these things meant nothing, neither pyramid nor Sphinx, nor fertile Nile, nor green of the barley, nor straining buffalo. Alive in his heart and his eyes was the vouchsafed mystery.

Here in this spot of the orb, bounded on the south and east and north by deserts and in the west by the sea, was the chosen land of God. Out of this vital spot on the globe came forth vitality. Mountains that were as formidable as spears, and plains that were smiling with flowers, the serrated belly of the wilderness, the sea that was bitter as death, and northward in Galilee, the sea that was fertile as the fertile plains. Because of some natural secret, some secret of God's, the very fountain of the world's vitality was there, close to hidden springs beneath the crust of earth. All folk and all kings felt it. They came with multitudes and chariots, Assyrian and Persian and subtle Pharaoh, preferring this throbbing secret place for a possession to India of the jewels and the elephants, and Arabia heavy with perfumes and amber, or Greece that was a dream of shimmering beauty. This land whose passion broke into prophecy and war.

They came for a little space, and held it, as twenty men can hold one giant down. And for a while the giant lay inert, while out of his captors the vitality and courage went, and then, with a sudden thrust, they were on their backs in the earth;

even the subtle Philistines who had sought to reign by craft. It was written: "Now there was no smith found throughout the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears." But all the cunning had not availed against the Hebrew vitality. Saul struck them, Jonathan harried them, David broke them like a dried twig. With David, king and warrior and minstrel, Israel had thought that the Hebrews and the Hebrew God would conquer the world. But it was not yet to be. Nor was it to be with Solomon, Sultan of the East. Some national vanity, some stubbornness in victory, had eaten into the national strength like cancer. They had known how to be victorious. They had known how to be great. They had flattered the God who had led them to victory with temples and feasts and sacrifices. They had treated their God like a kept woman. They had not heeded the thunder in his tones: "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them."

The men of Israel had shrugged their shoulders and winked. "God is angry," they said; "*fui!* he is angry. But it will pass. It has passed before. It will pass again."

But it had not passed. The vast edifice of Israel had crumbled like a rotting wall. The great drought came. The Pharaoh Meren-ptah swept over

the land like a visitation of locusts, and, "Israel is desolated," were his terrible, very words; "her seed is not." Moab revolted; Assyria levied tribute; Samaria fell. The glory and the kingdom and the power disappeared like leaves before the bite of winter. "Israel is desolated, her seed is not."

Though it should disappear into quietness for a while, the line of the psalmist-king and of Sultan Solomon was not dead. It slept. It lay fallow and acquired wisdom. It lay curled in the womb of the world. Men and women of it came and went, out of the silence into the silence, looking over their shoulder to see that the line followed, as they returned to the great storehouse of wisdom and strength, the *anima mundi*, soul of the world, bosom of Abraham, the land of a milk that is finer than fine wine, of honey that is rarer than any distilled by the expert, industrious, golden-bellied bees. "Israel is desolated, her seed is not," wailed the people. But in the rugous, specter-haunted wilderness, the old haggard dervishes dreamed, and spoke triumphantly and secretly. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold I will make thee a new threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." The tremor of the vital earth passed from foot-sole to mind and from mind to tongue, telling them that neither Pharaoh nor Cæsar nor Sultan should conquer the treasures it held. The ravens croaked, and the grackles cried, and the Moabite mountains tore

the clouds into jagged, serrated shapes, and storms lashed the heavy bosom of the sea that covered the cursed cities of the plain. Black sky and a black sea, dotted with gray billows, made ghostly and pale by the lightnings of Moab. The wind screamed, and the birds cowered, and the trees bent; and in the ripped sky, the old men streaming with their buffeting sheets of rain, mad with loneliness and holiness and patriotism, saw visions in the agony of the elements, saw the giant that was to spring from the great loin of David. "Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

And then he came.

But the eyes of the people were on the easy victories of Joshua, on the magnificence of Solomon, King of the East. In their worship of the Lord of Hosts they had forgotten the gentle god "who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." When they sought the Son of Man, they looked for one clad in fine linen, dyed with the purple of Syrian vats, shod with the gold of Ophir. They never saw the grave, gray-eyed child of Galilee. . . . Herod may have known. Vespasian had prophesied a Lord

of the World to rise out of Judea; and even Virgil, the pagan poet, had been inspired to speak of the coming reign. "Now the Virgin returns, now the Kingdom of Saturn returns, now a new progeny is sent down from high heaven. By means of Thee whatever traces of our sins remain shall be wiped out, and the world released from everlasting terror. He shall rule a pacified earth with the virtues of His father." With the coming of the vast new star that even now was in the firmament, Herod might have taken fright. His ways were deep and dark; and his Chaldean astrologers, the tall-capped, stone-silent Magi, may have told him that a power and beauty were born. And they may have warned the mother and father of Herod's dark design. So might the country tale have grown, as grew that later one of the boy's confounding the doctors in the Temple, but that was told also of Sadoc the Pharisee, and of Judas Maccabæus, such simple minds have country folk. They love to tell stories of their heroes in their youth. The tale of the untutored child and crabbed rabbi is David and Goliath unwittingly translated in their innocent heads. What matter about the childhood? This was certain, that a power and beauty were born. Very quietly he had lived in the valleys about Nazareth. From the hilltops of Nazareth he could behold the vast sea that stretched from Tyre to the Pillars of Hercules. Mount Tabor rose like a pillar beside him, and in the distance Hermon flaunted its snowy banner to the sun, and not many hours' walk away the blue Galilean Sea murmured. Sea and mountains and

fertile valleys, and quietly he grew up there, conscious of vast power and royal lineage. Greater than David, greater than Solomon, he knew patience, he knew how to wait until he came to full fruition. David had gone the way of war, and Solomon had studied dark, hidden things. The armor of David and the splendor of Solomon kept them from seeing the white, wonderful things. David had mastery over men, and Solomon over the dark spirits: Chasan, chief of the air; Arel, chief of fire; Phor-lakh, chief of the earth; and Taliahad, chief of water. Emerald and sapphire and ruddy gold they delivered to Solomon, which are diseased things of the earth, as the ambergris of great value is a diseased thing of sea-bred leviathan.

All the things of the earth were subjects and friends of the Dweller of the Lake. Barnabas had told him that at Gadara he had tamed the wild pigeons, and that often the bees would come and glisten in his hair, and that where he abode for a while there were always white roses and anemones. And that he had a favorite lark which would flutter down and nestle in his hand. In the quiet land, year after year, he had grown forceful and wise. While others were studying the intricacy of the effete Law, going backward in an attempt to fathom the minds of dead, troubled men, all the earth was a scroll to him. The vast vitality of the trees, driving themselves upward from the minute seed with a strength passing that of battle charger, the song and flight of birds, the robust winds, the little healing grasses. These were buried treasures, but they are not the

treasures of which dim-eyed students dreamed. He learned how healing came from Mother Earth, the crumbs of healing which Greek physicians knew as drugs; the earth had told him the whole of it, whispering gently at twilight, or in the noon of June. His body he had made a sounding pillar of nature, like the sounding pillar of a harp, filled with melody. He had conquered fear, and had infinite trust. Fear that makes hollow the heart of man had no place in him. So that when he walked on the lake which he loved, the lake knew him as brother and master. . . . Or, perhaps, it was that there was no evil in him, evil making the tissues like stone.

He was so good and so wise. That all men must work for one another, he knew, and knowing that, chose the finest of all trades, whittling the honest wood of the trees into doors of houses, into boats for the fishermen, into children's cradles. Quietly he would work, Saul felt, thinking all the time, developing the wisest of heads until it grew commensurate with that greatest of hearts. And then one day he had known the time was come, and he laid down his adze.

What vast charm, what power he had had, Saul thought! He had only to look at a man, and that man would follow him; he had only to lay hands on a sick man, and his own abounding vitality, drawn from healthy winds and thyme-covered earth, made him well. He had dauntless courage; his gallant rage against the money-changers in the Temple had shown he was no meek man. He had only to ally himself with the zealous, only to preach Zion Arisen

to the people, to have the swords that flashed for the Maccabees spring forth like unhooded falcons. What chance would Herod Antipas, whom the Jews loathed as an apostate and a profligate, the grandson of a sweep at Ascalon, have against him, did he care to call on the people? The harassed Pilate, the dying Tiberius—surely Rome was weak then. No period was more opportune for revolt. He might have founded a kingdom beside which Solomon's would have been a province. He knew it too, Saul felt, and was troubled. Would he give up his high mission, take the empire on earth, and let the message die? In the barren mountains near the Jordan, haunted by owls and satyrs, he had gone to fight it out. Which should it be for his people, a great truth or a great prosperity? What a terrible forty days, Saul shuddered; but it made him love the Man the more. Had he never known temptation, where was his strength? That he was human made him more easy to live up to, made his example the more valuable. People in the coming days would have said: "After all, he was a god, was he not? And we, we are only human. He cannot expect too much self-sacrifice from us. He knoweth."

He thought, were ever men so blessed as those who were chosen for his company! From his own lips, and from his own nearness to them, they learned simplicity. All the complexity of life vanished before his healing gaze, and they learned that the life they made such a problem of was a brief space, and would not endure; but later there was paradise, and to enjoy the felicity of paradise it was

necessary only to practise the charity of paradise. And to achieve simplicity it was necessary to hew away complexities which cover conviction as yellow stonewort covers a wall or gray moss a tree. When one was as rich as naked Adam one knew their heritage was paradise and eternity. Great God of Israel! how deadly a little riches or brief authority was! They blinded the soul as distilled wine the eyes. What an adventure for the chosen, greater than any Roman enterprise or campaign of Alexander. The stars were as fair to them, the sun as bright, the sea as pure as they had been in Eden. And when they slept, the wondrous day being done, it was with the knowledge that on the morrow they would see that grave, beloved face. And on the morrow some new wonder. Some poet, or some teacher out of the wilderness, might have said what Jesus had said, that no breadth of phylacteries or spotlessness of white cloaks could avail the ungenerous heart, the God of Israel having touched their lips with coals of fire. But all nature had conspired to help him, to accentuate his truths. When he laid his fingers on the eyes of the blind, the blind saw. All the healing of the earth was in his bosom. And he was generous with it. The shamed leper he healed so that he might walk again, a clean man among men. The birds came to him, and the flowers inclined toward him, and above him the arching larches rustled. And when he came to the house of mourning, where Mary and Martha sobbed, their brother Lazarus being dead, he too wept, the big-hearted man. And he had raised Lazarus from the dead.

He had not called back Lazarus from the dim house of rest where he slumbered for a while, but out of his own store of life he had given to Lazarus, so that his sisters could once more see the beloved eyes sparkle, hear the tender, beloved voice. Ah, what was there for Jesus after the greatness of his life but a death that would seal his teaching forever? Who could have expected him to live to fondle a gray, spittle-spotted beard?

And toward the end of his ministry, seeing how wisdom came from him as clear water from a well, seeing how all the secrets of nature were open to him, he had the problem to face of who he was. And because he had grown wise and powerful and to be trusted, it was revealed to him that he had been sent to tell all that God was not an Ancient of Days, sitting coldly on a cold turquoise throne, judging and punishing with the rancor of old men who had outlived their kindness, but the Lord who looseth the prisoners, who openeth the eyes of the blind, who raiseth them who are bowed down. He had not been chosen but been sent. Through the gates of the shadow of death he had been sent, and through the gates of death he must return. How thankful he must have been now that he recognized why he had been tempted in the wilderness, as Lucifer, son of the morning, had been tempted! He had held to his high mission. And when he had exhorted and taught and worked wonders, he had gone the way he had come, through the gates of the shadow of death, enduring the cruel kindness of Pilate, the spewing hatred of Caiaphas, the ignominy of the

gibbet. Through the shadows of the gates of death he had returned whence he had come, to the right hand of the turquoise throne of God. And for those who could see, there was a further mystery, that the body of approaching death was nothing, nothing being so dead as the body once the soul is gone, nothing so ill as the body when the soul is ill. Gaudy or drab, a nuisance or a gay garment, the body is nothing. And this was a mystery, which is a complexity for the complex in mind, but a simplicity for the simple of heart.

But then, he was not dead. He had died on the gibbet, and then came back, renewing the body, that body that was but a handful of ashes, a buffalo-skin of water for his convenience. So his disciples had said. Whether he was in the body or out of the body, what did it matter? The body in which he had suffered was nothing. He had used it for suffering, and its turn was done. That it had vanished was nothing. The earth which had nurtured it might have taken it into swift dissolution, lest only foulness remain of what had been so fair. What did it matter? The greatest thing in the world was that he had lived and had died, and still lived. What did a nest matter when the bird was grown and flown? And what did they matter anyway, who were caviling and stubborn and blind?

So little was the body to him that when cast aside he lived as easily without it as within it. Had not the twelve men seen him? Had not he himself, Saul, seen him in the terrific cosmic light that flooded the storm-torn Syrian wastes? In Damascus he had not

quite admitted it, for who can tell what strange fancies come to a man whose mind and heart are flogged and dropping horses? The weary brain and the dark night and the sleepless eyes invite visions. But in these years now he was convinced he had seen him. He remembered, as some old-time horror, some nightmare of childhood, the face that haunted him for weeks before the storm. He had fled, as it were, to the mountains before it, and to the plains, but it was ever there, and what fear of madness was in his heart, even now he did not care to dwell on it—the starting up in the night-time, the dread of being alone. It was the same face he had seen in the desert. But in the desert it was not a haunting image but a vital thing, and again in his ears he heard the quiet charitable voice: “*Shaûl, Shaûl, why persecutest thou me?*” And the sense of pity and understanding. “*Surely it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*”

He had never seen that haunting face again. He had never known fear again. He had known disappointment—the aloofness of the Nazarenes, their well founded distrust. He had known indignity. His running away from Damascus had made him a laughing-stock. But that he had seen the Lord Jesus he was sure. He would uphold that in any tribunal in the world.

He had said he would raise himself from the dead, that he would show himself to be above the vulgarity of being dead. The apostles, as they called themselves, had seen him. But did they understand? Did they understand that what he had done was

this: by his vast gifts and immense power he had confounded the cynics. The keen Aristotle, the gallant Maccabæus, the searching Euclid, the brooding Homer, did not end like the carcass of a dead donkey in a ditch—a gibe for poetasters. Did they understand this? Where was he now, Saul wondered. In what green valley of the stars did he now labor? On what sea of the moon did his spirit move on the face of the waters?

He was so great, so noble. And besides so kind, so thoughtful. Stories he had heard and laughed at in Jerusalem he now felt were true. That children had seen him, the children he had loved so much, and who were so broken-hearted at his end, all the world being a place of terror to them when they heard of the unimaginable debauch of cruelty that finished him. In their sleeping or in their waking he came to them and hushed the sobs, and healed the tear-swollen eyes.

"Small mammy, small mammy, I have seen the white rabbi of the birds."

"You have not, dear darling. Kohen Caiaphas flogged him, and crowned him with thorns, and hanged him on a gibbet, because he was good and Kohen Caiaphas was an evil man."

"But they did not, small mammy. That was only a tale some enemy of Kohen Caiaphas made up to frighten little children. They didn't hang him, for I have seen him and spoken to him and been kissed by him. And don't cry, little dark mammy; they didn't crown him with thorns. It was only an evil tale. They crowned him with stars. . . ."

The Egyptian officer of Roman troops, bored with dicing by the wall around the Sphinx, wandered across to the shabby figure under the shade of the great pyramid.

"Ho! father of sand and fleas!" he laughed in the Bedouin jargon. "Whence comest thou and whither goest thou?"

He was like some instrument of fate in a play of the Greeks, Saul thought, making Saul decide between Tarsus and Jerusalem.

"I come from Arabia," Saul answered in crisp Latin, "from behind and across the wilderness of Dahna and the Djebel Tomeyk, and Djebel Aja, and I go to Jerusalem."

"Lord," the Egyptian bowed servilely, "I speak only the Arab speech and the *koine dialektos*." Saul explained to him in Greek.

"Lord, can I help you through the toll-gates? for you are evidently a person of quality."

"I am a Roman citizen," Saul laughed. "The toll-gates are not for me."

"You go to Jerusalem, Lord, to help King Agrippa, and the noble Vitellius?"

"I go to Jerusalem, brother, to help a fisherman of Galilee, Cephas by name, called Simon Peter in our Greek tongue."

CHAPTER X

§ 1

WHILE Barnabas and Mark, the big athletic figure and the long and slender dreaming boy, were still on the quay-side of Seleucia, bidding farewell to friends from Antioch, Saul had uttered a crisp greeting, raised his hand, and come on board the Cyprus packet. Under the flare of the quay-side torches, where they were filling the boat with grain—an endless chain of donkeys with bags coming around the quay-side, and beside them like a mechanical extension, a line of naked men running down one plank into the hold of the boat bowed with sacks, and running up another plank on to the quay, erect—Saul could see Barnabas' genial smile, the flash of his powerful teeth, and see Mark, holding some friend by the hand, and in the other a flower, and dreaming, watching the line of donkeys and naked porters. There were Christians from Antioch and Seleucia, Romans, a Jew or two, many Greeks, a priest from the temple of Daphne, a friend of Barnabas; a group of women. They were all merry, Saul noticed. While he had been among them, they were constrained, uneasy. He had no humorous speech, as Barnabas had, or soft poetic discourse, like Mark. The iron man, the Christians called him.

He had come away and left them to their laughter. He wanted to be alone.

He leaned over the bow of the boat, watching the swift Orontes glide past, seeing and yet not seeing the violet water, the white eye painted on the strakes; westward the moon was dropping into the sea, pale as a pale rose-leaf, and the birds were beginning to sing with the dawn. Soon on the mountains back of Antioch the sun would light golden fires, and bathe, as with molten gold, the rose-gardens and lily-ponds, and make the towers and walls and the slight, strong Roman bridges like some Indian's dream of a golden heaven, and gild the great face the sculptor Likos had hewn in the rock above the town, until it would seem like a wonder of an Arabian poet's tale. The fish leaped in the river, and falling, sent up little showers of spray. Soon the sailors would begin to haul on the halyards of the great mainsail, and the southerly breeze would send them gurgling and heeling over the Bay of Antioch, toward Cyprus, the island of Venus.

It seemed to Saul that when the master of the vessel would give the word to cast loose from the quay, his life would begin. All he had done, thought, suffered, was but a preparation for this voyage, which would lead him God knew whither. Calmly casting his eyes back on the Asian shore, he could say, All is well there. Until a month ago, his power, the very existence of his organization had been uncertain. But now, he, Saul, sitting here in the bow of the Cyprus packet, was the Church of Christ.

Peter and John, at Jerusalem, might think they were, now that the gaunt head of James the Just had fallen; but he, Saul, knew he was. Even when James had lived, Saul knew he had the whip-hand of the Lord's brother. God of his fathers! he passed his hand over his brow with memory of weariness; if he hadn't fought for it, dominated them all, the very memory of Christ would have vanished from the earth.

He said to himself, with a quick surge of generosity, that they were all right, John and Peter; he would never hurt them, never bother them. They could be the heads of the Church, call themselves anything they liked, as long as he furnished the vitality and the iron strength. John, like a white flame, whose mind was clear as well-water, but a flame that the harsh gusts of the world might put out, none could see John without feeling that here was an authentic Saint of God. And Peter, the kindly, lovable, but weak Peter. None could ever meet him without feeling his immense charm—but weak! Any appeal to patriotism could sway him. The blue hills of Galilee and the quiet little synagogue of Capernaum were more to Peter than the heart of the world. How he had fought with James the Just for Peter, and how he had fought with Peter for Barnabas! He had been unjust, cruel, Saul had, but it was necessary. The tragedy of Christ's death would have been merged in the greater tragedy of Christ being forgotten, but for a memory, like the taste of honey, in the strong box

of old men's minds. A gentle, pathetic figure, to shake one's head over, instead of the Light of the World blazoned from land to land.

Well, he had averted that disaster. He had saved the Church. He had given it organization and vigor, and now he was setting forth to increase its membership a hundred, a thousandfold.

§ 2

But for Barnabas, he would never have seen Peter in Jerusalem, such a horror, such a terror, had the Nazarenes of the ex-inquisitor. They distrusted his conversion. They thought that beneath it all was some foul treachery. Where had he been these three years? In Arabia. Ha! they said, they had thought he was, perhaps, in Rome. No? And he had seen a vision on the road to Damascus? Really! Had any one else seen it? No, just himself? Perhaps he would see another vision, they smiled crookedly, and be reconverted to the policies of the Temple? Well, who could say! He had had one, anyway. Why not another? They were cruel. They had him in their power. It was Barnabas rescued him from the undignified baiting.

"I answer for Saul," the big Cyprian said. "He is my brother."

They accepted Barnabas' warranty with reluctance, muttering their parrot-cry of race-hatred, "These Greeks!" but Barnabas was too powerful, too sincere, to alienate. So they took Saul's conversion as serious, but negligible. Of course it had a

certain value. It raised the power of the Church in the people's eyes that he, who had once been a ravening wolf, the white-fanged leader of the wolf-pack, was now as a gentle lamb in the fold. That was of value, of course, but Saul himself they could not stomach.

Peter would only receive him when James the Lord's brother was present. Saul's heart went out to the old syndic of the fishermen who had been the Lord's favorite disciple. He was a big, curly-headed man, with deep gray eyes and huge wrinkles in his forehead. He had gnarled misshapen hands, the consequence of his early days at boat-sheets and fishing-nets, and there was a great sorrow in his face. He had denied Jesus on the night of his arrest, and Saul had heard that each night since he had wept bitterly for it. And he was always preaching the forgiveness of sins, from knowledge within himself. Saul felt that he was a man who would understand everything. He was a man who was so lovable that anything would be forgiven him. He looked at Saul, not trying to examine him, but seeking to understand him. But James was bitter and hard.

Though hardly fifty yet, James seemed so old as to be approaching dissolution. His tawny beard, flecked with gray, swept almost to his knees. And out of the wilderness of his face his hooked eagle's nose and burning eyes gave an impression of un-earthliness. His white linen robes were sepulchral, seemingly, and his hands like the claws of birds. No wine, or even grapes, or flesh, had ever passed his lips, nor had his hair ever been cut or oiled. His

knees, so it was said, had become wrinkled and tough as the knees of elephants from his praying in the Temple. No Essene on shores of the Dead Sea was as ascetic as this Nazarite. It was said that of all living Jews none had avoided more the least infraction of the Law. Saul wondered what this fanatical devotee of the Temple should ever have to do with the gentle Nazarene faith. Some tremendous pull drew the grim ascetic toward the followers of the son of his father's young wife. He was a man torn terribly, James the Just.

Peter listened as Barnabas explained, with quick looks of sympathy, Saul's change of heart. Saul felt the old fisherman understanding little by little. But James was cold. His eyes were cold and hard as the Temple stones.

"Saul," Peter said at length, "we forgive you. Go in peace."

"But I do not wish to go, Peter. I wish to stay and work with you."

"The blood of Stephen is hardly dry upon the stones," James said. "The echo of children's cries still hangs about the eaves of Jerusalem. The dungeons of Machærus are filled with the bones of men you sent there. In Pontus, in Egypt, in Greece, men are weeping for Zion, whom you sent into exile, Look, you are a rich man," James sneered; "will you build the houses you burned, pay blood-money for the killed, bring back the exiles? Will you do this? If you do not do this, we do not want you."

"Beloved James—" Peter began.

"Hush!" James stood up. He was like some

fierce, threatening bird. "You have no manliness. You would take this murderer, this traitor, to your heart."

"I have no money now, but when money comes to me you may have it. I can but speak," he said, "and take up Stephen's work where I interrupted it."

"Saul speaking!" James sneered again. "Saul who persecuted the sect of Jesus, speaking now for Jesus—"

"I did not kneel in the Temple, praying for the preservation of the Temple, while the priests of the Temple hanged my brother for speaking against the Temple," Saul answered coolly.

"Saul, Saul!" Barnabas cried.

"And if I did persecute the Nazarenes, I increased them a hundredfold; for everywhither they fled, to Samaria, to Asia, to Egypt, they brought their doctrine. I was but the wind winnowing the seed. I can but speak, and I will speak to the people."

"I forbid you to speak," James said. "I am the Lord's brother."

"I hold my commission from the Lord's living self," Saul said. "Come, Barnabas. Peter, you shall hear of me soon. Where Stephen stopped, I shall go on."

He could see, in vague flashes; he could feel, in acute twinges of mental pain, the high lights of his short third visit to Jerusalem. He had gone into the synagogues, where he had disputed against Stephen, and begun to preach Jesus as the Christos, and the Resurrection. He had felt cool, poised. The

poise of his brain was the poise of a child's top spinning madly. His own passion gave his brain the strokes of the whip. But they would not engage him in controversy. They jeered at him and laughed at him. "Who is this son of thunder?" "It is Saul, who hath the falling sickness." "And what does he say?" "He preaches Jesus of Galilee." "Jesus of Galilee? Who was Jesus of Galilee! Ah, yes, to be sure, the bastard who was hanged." Their coarse shouting drowned the quotations from the prophets which he was citing. They looked at him with hatred and contempt. Over their faces, furrowed with thought, swept a coarseness, a foulness that was terrible to see. All their conventional graciousness of theological disputants was wiped out. "Wipe the sow's fat from your mouth, O sleeper with dead women!" The obscenity from the old learned men's mouths was like a breath of the pest-house. "Ho, rabbi that was, you say you saw a vision of Such a One's shining face, and you became Nazarene. Say, were you to see a vision of Anna's shining thighs, would you become Jew once more?" Against this reek as of a Sabbath of witches, there was nothing to be done. Scourgings, stonings, he could have faced. But the sidelong smile, the foul word, killed the dignity of his mission as dead as Haman.

He was an outcast from the Jews, and had never really been at one with the Nazarenes. He could see the aloof pity in the eyes of the Romans as he passed. It occurred to him that they would listen more readily than any of his own race.

But the worst was yet to come. Emissaries from

Peter and James visited him, and asked him to stop disputing in the synagogues. "All the bitterness and rancor were passing," they complained, with hot, resentful eyes, "until you came and revived it. Surely you have done us enough harm. Your help is more terrible than your persecution. We were happy and peaceful until you came."

"And the Christos was being forgotten."

"What have you to do with the Christos, Saul of Tarsus?"

"Nevertheless, I shall preach him."

But none would listen to him. Barnabas, who was torn between his understanding of Saul's sincerity and his loyalty to Peter and James, came to him and told him that certain zealots were for killing him, secretly in the night, and in that way getting rid of him, and blaming the deed on the Nazarenes. "So, you see, Saul, little one, Paul, that if you love us, you must go from us."

"Give me time to think, Barnabas," he asked. And he went into the Temple.

And here in the soft Judean dusk, as he prayed for guidance, again he saw, whether in the body, or out of the body, God only knew, that shining vision. In a mood that was between earth and sky, between sleeping and waking, he saw again the beloved form he had seen on the Damascus road. And as he woke there remained an echo of golden speech in his ears: "Depart, for I will send thee far hence among the Gentiles." It seemed like an answer to his own thought, that the Romans and Greeks would listen to him, while they of Jerusalem . . . !

"Bring me to Peter, Barnabas, and then I will depart."

But Peter was with James, as always, and when he spoke of the vision in the Temple, Peter was puzzled, bothered, and James sneered.

"So that I am to spread the great tidings among the Gentiles."

Peter shook his head. "He Himself said: It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs."

The narrow nationalism of the man struck a chill into Saul. He stood aghast.

"From his own lips, in a vision, have I had this instruction."

"O father of visions," James said, "what seeming had He when He spoke to you in these visions? How were His eyes, His hair, His dress? For this man and I, His friend and His brother," went on James shrewdly, "knew Him so well that we shall understand if you speak truth. Did He speak Hebrew, or Greek, or Syrian to you? Was His voice high, or low?"

"There was a great light," Saul answered, "and a voice that breathed like a harp. I heard it, James, not with my ears, but with my heart."

James laughed. The laughter of James was harsher, more terrible, than the obscene gibes of the doctors of the Law.

"Saul, go from us," Peter said; "go from us, and leave us in peace."

"One of you denied Him," Saul said bitterly, "and

one of you did not believe in Him. Yes, I shall go hence."

§ 3

But whither he would go, or what he would do there, he did not know. Four years ago he had left Tarsus in triumph, the chosen of the Sanhedrim, the friend of Caiaphas. It would have been better to have returned to Tarsus from Egypt, rather than to have gone to Jerusalem. Nothing travels so fast as bad news, and the Nazarenes of Tarsus would have heard, by his return, of his reception at the hands of the people in Jerusalem, and would avoid him as suspicious. And the orthodox Jews would hate him, with the hatred all classes, all nations, have for a renegade. His own family would not understand. His father had been so proud of him, exalting himself among the elders of Cilicia on account of his son, so high in the Senate of his people. And now the old man would pay for it, nothing being so bitter as the revenge of old men. And his mother, nothing would be so contemptible to her as lack of success. Under the great pyramid his heart had yearned for Tarsus, but now he had no heart for Tarsus any more.

"Barnabas, my brother Barnabas, I have it in my bosom to wait here for the knives of the zealots."

"No, Saul. You must go on. You have had your vision. You must obey."

"But none believe in my visions, Barnabas. The

cold eyes of James and the weak eyes of Peter, they cheapen my vision. And who will listen to me, with those against me?"

"Saul," Barnabas said, "there are many in Jerusalem who believe in you. But see how difficult it is for them to say anything. They can't break with Peter. Peter, weak as he is, is yet the friend and lieutenant of the Lord. Saul, Peter is good, and Peter has vast powers. He can stand persecution now, which once he could not. And the healing power the Lord left him is past telling. They all know of your sincerity, but— Do you see, Saul?"

"But don't you see, Barnabas, how small and contemptible a vision he has? That only for Israel is the truth. Lord God of Hosts! Is Heaven so small that it can hold only Jewry? Is he afraid that there won't be room enough for all? What right has he to refuse the light to the Gentiles? We know, you and I, Barnabas, how among Greek and Egyptian and Roman, the cold and empty faces of the gods of stone and wood no longer satisfy. They hear the call of Israel that the Lord, our God, is One. And we take them into the Covenant, and where before they had an open, barren space, we give them the close, bolted prison of the Law. And they find the Temple as empty as the groves of Venus. While all the time we have the knowledge of the true Lucifer, Son of the Morning, who was sent to set us free from the fetters of the Law. Barnabas, I think Peter denies Jesus more now than he did to the damsel in the house of Caiaphas."

"Saul," Barnabas began quietly, "Saul, there is

none like you, none. You are like a burning flame. You are like a naked sword. You burn with energy. Your mind cuts like a Roman sword, but, Saul—”

“Yes, Barnabas.”

“Until you learn to understand and feel for James, tortured between love of the Temple he has been trained to from his mother’s womb, and love of his brother, whom he knew to be all goodness incarnate, and Peter, who has been steeped in the spirit of the Maccabees, and to whom the Greek and Roman and Arab are the enemies of his people, who have no right to anything in Jewry, because they have oppressed Jewry, until you can understand and feel for these men, you have not yet understood the Lord.”

“Then you don’t believe, Barnabas, in my visions,” Saul said bitterly. “Not even you!”

“I do believe,” Barnabas said. He took him by the shoulders. “My belief in God, Saul, is not greater than my belief in you. But— Perhaps the time is not yet.”

“What shall I do, Barnabas? Go back to Arabia, or up the Nile in Egypt, or to Gades in Galatia—”

“Neither, Saul. Go back to Tarsus and rest. Listen, Saul; you have not been a fortnight in Jerusalem, and yet you have more gray hairs to comb. The shadows are deeper about your eyes. And if you go again into the desert, brother, your mind will only become keener. It will become thin and too keen, like the edge of an over-sharpened sword. Keen minds are common as pennies, Saul, but the broad heart is a great golden coin. Go back to the

gardens of Tarsus, Saul, and the river you love, and the swans on its bosom at the close of day. Saul, there are people who love you, and admire you; but they can't tell you of it, for their speech is not the currency of your mind, and they are ashamed to speak. Go back to Tarsus, and suffer people to be kind to you, and forgive foolish people. Go back to Tarsus and make friends."

"It will be hard."

"Is anything easy worth doing, brother? None knows that better than you."

§ 4

Barnabas was right. Tarsus, the sight of the river Cydnus; the cries of the merchants so like and so unlike the cries in other cities; this quay; that wall; a group of trees half a stadium away; a flection of the native dialect; an old man driving a donkey, whom he remembered to have seen ten years before, had all on him the effect of reassembling his mental, spiritual values. It was as though he had wakened out of a vast dream, that yet was not a dream, into and among the casual loved objects of everyday life. And from the shelter of these objects had begun to explore the dream.

His father was surly toward him. The old man was too steeped in Hebraic life to entertain for one instant the idea that the Messiah had come and gone, and yet had too much respect for his son's brains not to believe that there was something in it which he could not understand. He watched Saul with the

intentness of a house-dog suspicious of a visitor, and when he saw that Saul was still adhering strictly to the Mosaic law, was still a Pharisee of the Pharisees, he shook his head. And then with that certain faculty of old men, which is often taken for tolerance, but is really only a desire for comfort, he put the whole question aside. . . . Saul's dark secret mother, whose Judaism was tinged with a strain of Persian superstition, had already in her own mind evolved a theory of Jesus of Galilee. She clung to the popular belief that the young rabbi had cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the Lord of Flies; but she held that he had made a pact for power with the prince of devils in the wilderness, and then revoked on his bargain, and used the power for good. In the end the Lord of Flies had betrayed him to Caiaphas. Nothing could shake this hard-headed woman from this absurd belief. To her the great Galilean was half saint, half idolater. Yes, he had cured the halt, the lame, and the blind, but he had transgressed God's Sabbath. No, she would argue no more.

In the synagogues of Tarsus the fathers had been prepared to jeer, as they had jeered in Jerusalem. They had expected to see a broken man, meek with the meekness of the Nazarenes. They met a figure with the spotless robe, the broad phylacteries of the Pharisee, scrupulous in the most minute details of the Law, aloof and haughty as he had never been in the days of arrogance as a Sanhedrist. He came among them like a drawn sword, threatening and terrible and shining as a naked sword. He was aloof

and threatening as a high mountain. He never spoke in the synagogues except when mention was made of the coming of the Messias.

"The Messias has come." And while they raged impotently he stood there quiet and sneering. He was no true Nazarene, this Saul. There was no meekness in him. He was a naked and terrible fighter. His tones of exaltation had about them the clear ring of a bell. His low tones had the ominous hiss of a snake. He knew every one in the congregation and their lives and weaknesses, and his revelations were like the cutting of whips. Nothing could be done against him. He could not be scourged. He could not be excommunicated with trumpets. He was a Roman citizen, and so long as he did not advocate the overthrow of Cæsar, free speech and thought and action were assured to him. When he entered the synagogue, he was protected by his citizenship as by armed and bucklered legions. In a while it was tacitly agreed in the synagogues that the mention of the Messias must not be made, lest Saul speak. Never before strangers in the synagogue must the Messias be mentioned, lest Saul speak.

But Saul was in Tarsus only half the year. During the rest he was away buying goats' hair for the looms in his father's factories, visiting weavers in the Libanus and buying their products from them. When Saul returned there were always stories for him of some Nazarene who, tired of awaiting the second coming of the Lord, had made submission to the synagogue council, and of how in this town, in Tyana, in Faustinopolis, in Cilician Gates, in

Cylistra, in Pompeiopolis, in Sasima, in Podandus, the mysterious and obscure Paulus, a Nazarene disciple, had been treated. Whence he came and whither he went, none knew. A man in a brown cloak and striped head-dress, none ever saw him enter a town, and none leave. The theory was that the Nazarenes sheltered him. Some renegade rabbi, well paid, no doubt. He had the Law and the Prophets at his finger-tips, and had a certain oratorical power over the emotional and weak-minded. In Tyana and Faustinopolis and Sasima he had been scourged, receiving the thirty-nine stripes synagogue authorities were permitted to give. His back, it was said, was a vast crisscross of scars. He was no Roman citizen. He claimed no protection from the governors. In Tyana he had been stoned, and left for dead. Oh, undoubtedly the man had a devil, for he recovered. Not only that, but he had been wrecked in the Gulf of Issus, off Ægæ, and been for a night and day in the deep, clinging to a spar, before being rescued. Surely the man had a demon.

"He makes converts, I hear, by the hundreds."

"Fools and light-minded folk," Saul was answered bitterly. "But you are looking ill, Saul, white and weak. And you move clumsily, as if your back were stiff with rheumatism. The air of the mountains does not agree with you, Rabbi Saul."

"Evidently not."

"And oh, look! You have a great scar on your forehead, and your ear is bruised. Did you fall from your horse among the stones?"

"Something like that."

"And you still believe that the Nazarene was the promised Messias?"

"Nothing is surer."

"Well!" they said uncomfortably. "Well!" they laughed uncomfortably. "Well!" they finished weakly. And they went away.

§ 5

He sat by himself in the loved Tarsan dusk, on the roof of the weaver's house where he had sat so often as a child and as a man. The roof-top had still the old magic, so that here he could think clearly. Here he was Saul, the white-robed doctor of the Law, the teacher without pupils, the rabbi without a congregation. And he thought of Paulus, the brown-cloaked pilgrim, who went through Cilicia preaching God and Jesus the Christos. The followers of Saul were none; the followers of Paulus were thousands.

The Nazarenes who were Jews had been given only a figure and a story. But Paulus had given to the hungry Greeks a theology. Even the Greeks knew in their hearts that there was one God. While Greek and Egyptian were dreaming vaguely in past ages of one God, the Jews, with their daring rapid brain, had seized it and made it their own. And in the heads of old men it had become imprisoned until it had taken on an aspect of vast wisdom and vast age, a sort of super-old man, the Ancient of Days, cruel and a little mean. The Greeks had evolved the Logos, the supreme intellectual principle, out of the

world, and dominating the world. Paulus had welded for them the union between the sentient God and the intellectual principle. The Logos was an attribute of God. Yes, the Greeks could follow that.

Jesus had been the son of God. How? By the divine inspiration, the formal will of God, the Holy Ghost, on the body of a young woman. He was the fullness of Divinity. He was the nearest approach on earth to God. He was the Logos made flesh. The Logos made flesh had died! Naturally, the Logos had died. All that lives in the world must die. The Logos was made flesh so that it might die. The Logos had descended on earth to show that death was not all. A cynic poet, Alpheius of Cyrene, had said that life was a wine-shop where one fares so poorly that he would leave it at once but that he feared to call for the reckoning. And the reckoning was death. But the Christos had triumphed over death, for all to see. Death was no longer to be feared.

He would call on every reserve of physical and spiritual strength in him, and, by some subtle chemistry, he would infuse his own self into the listeners until they thought with his mind, felt with his heart, saw with his eyes. The Nazarenes of Jerusalem gave the people a pitiful tale to marvel at. Paulus gave them an idea and a faith. Now some one must give them organization.

That this would come he was certain. He had learned patience here in the Asian dusk, and he had faith that organization would come. . . . Often his mind would wander back over the years, and he

would see the wife of his early days in his mind's eye, and now he would understand her, and he felt she had forgiven him, because she was dead. She was with Christ, which is far better. Very, very often he thought about her, but when his mother spoke of her, he would say, as if coming from afar through thought: "Who? What Nossis? Ah, yes, I had forgotten." He knew his mother would think he was bitterly callous, but he didn't want his life brought out and examined. But perhaps his mother knew in spite of all. She was such a dark, secret woman.

"A man of Antioch to visit you, Rabbi." One of his mother's maid-servants brought a stranger on to the roof.

"Brother Saul."

"You have been a long time coming, Barnabas," he said, before he had even seen the Cyprian's vast bulk. It seemed to him now he had always been waiting for Barnabas. "But you are here at last."

"Saul, are you Paulus?"

"Yes, I am Paulus."

The face of Barnabas became white under the Syrian tan. He looked at Saul as though he were a ghost.

"Man, but you have suffered!"

"Yes," Saul said quietly. "There are none in Jerusalem who have gone through more than I. None I ever persecuted has suffered more than I. In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews," he said bitterly, "five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice I was beaten with rods, once was I

stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. I have known them all. Now, Barnabas, will Peter and James the Just consider I have bought my way?"

"Saul, at any moment you could have claimed Roman citizenship, and avoided the scourgings and the stonings and the prisons."

"I know, Barnabas," he smiled, "but had I done it, it would have been admitting that I was Saul, the son of havoc, and Jew and Nazarene would have avoided me. After all it was only fair to suffer what I had made others suffer. And besides, it might satisfy Peter and James."

"Whether or not Peter and James want you," Barnabas said, "there are a thousand and more Greeks around Antioch who want Paulus, and who are inimical to Jerusalem. Saul, Peter and James insist that the Gentiles must be Jews before they are Nazarenes. And the Gentiles will not have this. Will you come to Antioch?"

"Yes."

"When will you come?"

Saul rose and looked about him. The stars were out, and he could hear the hiss of the river as the tide turned. There was a boat of his father's by the quays, just in from Egypt. A northeast breeze

blew steadily seaward. It would be right abeam on the sail toward Seleucia.

"When will you come, Saul?"

"Now."

§ 6

He saw, as he entered Antioch, that there were two forces he must fight. In no city was paganism, to use a loose term, so rife. In no city was so much idleness of mind, so much profligacy of pleasure. The groves of Daphne, where, among the laurel-trees, Apollo shone in white stone, where dead Apollo shone in dead-white stone, with a gay cynicism men and women went to the worship of Venus. With a laugh and a cynical gesture, the Syrian poets sang their songs of girls and flowers and wine; Petronius, the Roman governor, sat in his palace, and certain that the Syrians were bound with rose-leaves, watched warily the Jews on his left-hand side. No rose-leaves could bind that harsh population. But Syria was safe for Rome. So long as Chaldean soothsayers, as Egyptian acrobats, as Greek hetæræ, walked down the long Street of Columns that great Herod had builded, so long would the singing Syrians not ponder why foreigners ruled them. Very musically the fountains plashed. Softly the lilies waved their languorous heads in the small artificial lakes, and swans in the Orontes swam beneath arches as graceful as themselves. To be governed, Petronius knew, one must be a hedonist. To govern one must be a stoic.

Warily, as a general officer, Saul plotted his cam-

paign. He knew, now he was older, that in a city noted for profligacy there were as many who rebelled against profligacy as indulged in it. The wives and daughters of citizens hated the groves of Daphne. That was why there were so many converts to Judaism. If to these people could be preached a clean religion, a religion with vitality, he would gain thousands of converts, mainly women. But women had sons. Also, riches, as of Antioch, brought culture; and culture bred thought. And for those who thought, he knew, his *Messias*, his *Christos*, would overthrow the vague systems of native worship. Thought is a parasite. Without something to cling to, it becomes diffuse, moribund. For the food of their thought he would give them the unending vitality of the *Christos*. He would send to Jerusalem for an exact transcript—John or Matthew could give it—of Jesus' sermon on the mountain of Galilee.

Jerusalem, hm! Where he was preaching asceticism, Jerusalem was preaching a doctrine of universal love that was dangerous as paganism. The promiscuous kissing, the exaltation of love-feasts, were dangerous. The idea was true, as also Peter's doctrine of the forgiveness of sins; but couple the two and you had danger. It softened people, and God knows, the way to *Anastasis*, the resurrection, was not soft. Also, the practice of speaking in tongues was silly. It was what the Greeks call *hysteria*. Unless you had solid thought behind it all, system, it would not endure. Peter taught kindness and relaxation. Saul taught asceticism. Peter must give way.

But when?

When the church was swamped with Gentiles, he saw, when the church at Jerusalem could not fare without them. When they could impose their will.

He looked about him for men he could trust. Barnabas? Well, not yet. Barnabas was too much the old comrade of Peter. Too loyal. Better leave him for a while. There was Simeon Niger, the huge Abyssinian, with his vast frame, his singing voice, his touch of Egyptian mysticism; Lucius of Cyrene, the gentle dreamer; and Manæn, who had been the foster-brother of Herod Antipas, a Jewish aristocrat and intellectual, who believed firmly in the Christos, but despised a little the vulgarity of the Jerusalem belief in the coming heaven with thrones and mansions. All these men were independently wealthy, or merely comfortable now that most of their money had been given away. In these men the Greeks would trust, knowing they had no motive of gain behind their teaching. The Nazarenes were mainly poverty-stricken, and had to be supported by their converts. Against that Saul had no quarrel. The catechumen and catechist must share alike. But—it was a weapon.

But where he would not impose on his converts any bonds of the Law, very shrewdly he began to organize in Asia—here with the help of Barnabas—the converts into an organization not unlike that of the Temple. Small synagogues with visiting disciples. Where, by the rule of the Sanhedrim, every orthodox Jew must send every year a half-shekel for the upkeep of the Temple, Saul insti-

tuted a voluntary offering for the upkeep of the poor Nazarenes in Jerusalem. The results were tremendous. Money came flowing into the Church treasury from the Greeks as it had never flowed into the Temple treasury from the Jews. Of this Saul would not touch a penny. He was willing that the apostles in Jerusalem and their wives should be supported out of the fund, but for himself he worked in a sail-loft of Antioch to gain his living.

"But, Saul," Barnabas protested, "is this fair to the others? The Greeks sneer a little at Cephas and the others, and their sister wives, but you they revere as the statue of probity. Is it fair?"

"Do they at Jerusalem yet admit me as an apostle and commissioned of Christ?"

"But, Saul, don't you see their difficulty? It hasn't been revealed to them that you had a vision. To them you're only a strange man, preaching a Christ who is not their Christ—"

"They never knew Christ," Saul said.

Barnabas threw out his hands with a gesture of sullen resignation.

"Saul, if I didn't know how sincere, how true you are, I would say you were a ruthless politician."

"If I am ruthless, it is for the truth. My politics are the politics of the Lord, Barnabas."

"I know, Saul. But you must understand Peter. Our old faith was a very gentle faith. It was like sitting by a fountain in an hour of moonlight. It was like the first dawning of a boy's love. There was something shy and intimate and lovely about it. And now you have made it like a drawn sword."

"I preach no sword, Barnabas."

"No," said Barnabas. "You preach as Paulus the Prisoner, but you think as Saul the Swordsman."

"Peter is in Jerusalem, Barnabas," Saul hinted.

"You are here, Saul, and with you I stay. For this, Saul. You are right, and Peter is wrong. Peter sees the world in one small country. In one small province. The Sea of Galilee and the walls of Jerusalem are the limit of Peter's vision. And the shadow of the Ancient of Days is over the face of Christ with Peter and with James. Saul, cannot you understand how my heart is sore for old comrades in pain? Though you are right and they are wrong, yet my heart grieves for them. Though I cling to you and deny them, yet my heart is with them. Can you understand?"

"I can understand, Barnabas. I can understand well. But you must understand this. I revere Peter, I am fond of Peter. Am I to hate the lieutenant of the Lord? Not I! But! I will fight Peter until my death for this, that the Light is not for the dusty crevices of the Temple, but for the innumerable world."

It seemed that Providence itself were fighting for Saul. A whim of Caius Caligula, Little Boots, was that a golden statue of himself should be set up and worshiped in the Temple of Jerusalem. Throughout all Jewry was an instant's trembling shock of horror. The most lax of Jews felt a surge of patriotism at the mention of this most unheard-of profanation. There was an instant refusal. At the head of two legions Petronius marched to Cæsarea.

The suave governor had no sympathy with Caligula's mad arrogance, but he must obey.

Wherever the Romans turned the land was desolation. In Cæsarea Petronius was met by unarmed thousands with throats bared for the knife. They would not fight, but it would be across their dead bodies that the Temple should be profaned. Foremost among them was the Nazarite, James the Just. The followers of Jesus who had rebelled against the Temple felt a return of the old allegiance now that the Golden House was in danger, the dwelling-place of the Living God. Like some prophet, out of the wilderness, out of ancient days, the Lord's brother told Petronius that they had come to die. The corn was left uncut, the asses wandered wild through the tilled fields, the grapes were eaten by birds. For forty days they stayed the Roman army, while Petronius sent an embassy to his master. Before the matter was settled, Caligula was murdered in Rome. When the protestants dispersed, there were fewer Nazarenes than ever. And through the secret patriotic societies of the Jews, the name of James ran like marsh-fire. Here was the man who had saved the Temple from ignominy. Here was one beloved by the orthodox, beloved by the Nazarenes too. Here was a rightful descendant of David. In case the day came, as the day must come, when the Holy City and the Holy Land would rise against the Romans, here was a figure around whom to rally, rather than the Romanized Herod, rather than the High Priests, who bought and sold the office for gain. Here was a King of the Jews, they whispered.

But the new emperor, Claudius, gave Herod Agrippa his kingdom of Galilee, and added Judea and Samaria; and Herod Agrippa, being no fool, reached out for James the Just, and the head that might have worn the crown of Judea rolled in the dust beneath the executioner's sword. He announced that it was his zeal for the Temple that made him do this, James being a Nazarene. And he had Peter arrested. It looked as if a great epoch for orthodox Judaism were approaching. Again men began to await the coming of the Messiah, and dreamed of days when the light of the sun would increase a thousandfold, there would be a thousand times more apples on the trees. Joy would be universal, death forgotten. Elijah would return.

But suddenly Herod died at the pinnacle of glory. He fell, and he rotted where he fell. And Peter, in the turmoil, escaped or was let out of prison. And over the smiling golden land the black wings of famine began to flap. Agabus, a messenger from Jerusalem, came to Antioch, and appealed for help for Peter's starving flock. Saul stretched out his brown, cupped hand.

"I have Peter there," he said to himself.

§ 7

Wherever they went along the road, they saw people dying. They crawled out of houses and mewed at them, like cats, but pitifully. The skin on their faces was transparent and the bones shone through the cheeks. Their nails were long and their

hair matted, and they looked as if they had been buried and clawed their way out through the inhospitable earth. Men and women who had been lean were now thin ghosts, with vast accusing eyes. And those who had been burly and jocose were now loose bags with a whey of their old vitality, and stupid looking. They would have been funny were they not so tragic. They crawled on all fours, like animals, and ate grass, as sick dogs do. At every few miles the Romans had relief-stations; they had commandeered cattle of all kinds, bullocks, swine, and sheep, and slain them out of hand. The savor of their caldrons rose in the air. But the rumor had spread that all was ceremonially unclean, and the dying Jews turned away from the stupefied Romans, clutching the babies to them, whom the Romans tried to save. They turned from the steaming flesh-pots and looked toward Jerusalem, and, "Hear, O Israel!" they croaked in their dry throats—their voices were like the rasp of the wind in standing corn—"Our God is One God!" And they died.

Saul had intended having a strict understanding with Peter, making the older man acknowledge his mission, and agree to accept everything Saul did and preached as sound doctrine. It would be cruel, he knew, but it would be for the good of the cause. Things like this were necessary. He held the money. He had sent agents to Alexandria to buy corn, and to Cyprus to collect dried figs; and already now they were loading long caravans of camels at Joppa, protected by stern Bedouins. Just a half-hour's conversation with Peter, first. . . . He went in to

Peter with his face set in grimness. Barnabas turned away his troubled eyes.

Peter had aged twenty years since he saw him last. His face was just one mask of pain and doubt. He looked at Saul with a little fear in his eyes. He had suffered so much; was Saul going to make him suffer more? The look went straight to the Grecian's heart. He walked over and threw his arm around the old man's shoulder.

"We are here, Father," he said quietly.

"It was good of you to come so quickly, Saul."

"Now, what do you need?"

"We have nothing," Peter said. He spread his palms wide. "Nothing."

"Well, I have brought everything," Saul told him; "fruit and oil and corn and money."

"We don't need much, Saul." There were tears in the old man's eyes. "We are a very little people now. You see," he said, "they wouldn't help us. The priests wouldn't help us at all."

"But you had the Roman relief-stations. Didn't you use them?"

"How could we, Saul?"

"Why not?" A gust of passion shook the Tarsan missionary. Lord God of Hosts! was there no limit to the weakness and vacillation of this man? To let his people die through allegiance to an outworn Mosaic law. And only a few years ago Peter himself had decreed that all things were clean to eat. Ah, James again! The accursed Nazarite governed them even from the tomb. The little children and the trusting women! He shivered with anger. His face

took on the stone mask that Barnabas knew so well. His eyes dilated, and he closed them. He swayed on his heels, keeping silent, trying to master his rage.

"How could we, Saul? What would the orthodox have said if they had seen us eating the unclean Roman messes? We would have been hated more than ever. Don't you see, Saul? Can't you understand?" he pleaded.

The agonized note in the old man's voice swept the anger out of Saul as the wind sweeps away a mist. He was so sincere, was the old man, so lovable. All that was wrong with him was weakness. Saul dropped on his knees and soothed him as one soothes a child.

"You were quite right, Father. It was the right thing to do."

"Was I right, Saul? I didn't know. I was so worried. I wanted death myself, sooner than decide, but it wouldn't come, Saul. And I prayed for guidance, but I must have prayed selfishly, for there was no answer. So I decided. And I was not sure I was right."

"Of course you were right, Father Cephas. Wasn't he, Barnabas? Wasn't he right?"

But Barnabas couldn't answer, so tight was his throat, so dim his eyes.

CHAPTER XI

§ I

A GAINST the purple breast of Cyprus, the high cliffs, the white coves of shell and sea-sand, the great sea was green as summer. The little towns of Cyprus were like white clusters of flowers among green leaves. The almond-trees flowered, and the white blossoms of the orange. And everywhere were vines. Everywhere were women carried on couches, their skin white as milk, their dark hair braided with gold, their finger-tips and palms dyed orange with henna. They looked at the dreaming Mark, the huge muscular Barnabas, and the lithe keen Saul with eyes of wonder. Were these Jews? How strange! Cyprus knew only the shrill-voiced trading Jews, and the vast population of Jewish miners, squat, gnarled folk, who emerged a whitish gray from the salt-mines, or from the copper-mines, every wrinkle of their face lined with green, their hair greenish, their faces like old oak-trees, their burning, hating eyes. Surely great Augustus was wrong to have ever leased the mines to Herod, for these savage men were a danger. They were an insult to Venus in her own island. They spat as they passed the temple of Paphian Venus. And where she rose from the sea, pink as dawn, gentle as

a curling wave, they stood and spat, and growled their guttural obscenities.

They had crossed the island, after staying a while at Salamis, through the clefts of hills, through yellow crops, and groves of green cedar. Everywhere Olympus, blue, cloud-capped like Hermon, seemed to go with them, suspicious of their mission. Brooding, aged, very gentle with age, the old gods seemed to huddle on Olympus as their last battlement. Below to the temple of Venus, marked with crescent and star, and having in its inmost shrine not a statue as of Phidias, but a mystic cone of white marble, still emperor and proconsul and great merchant came. But for how long? Zeus was forgotten. Apollo denied. And Vulcan! In the guttering, roaring smithies, the sweating Jewish craftsmen laughed at his name.

Saul was so quiet, so reserved, that on this journey through the islands Barnabas wondered. In every mine, in every synagogue, Mark had preached. The gentle, emotional Mark, who was so much of Jerusalem. To Barnabas they would not listen willingly, for Barnabas was of Cyprus himself. And Saul was so much the Greek in outlook, so much the Roman in nationality, that he was not welcome to them. They were a strange folk, the men of the mines. They were close to the earth. The earth had communicated to them some of her dark secrets. They were dour. But they listened to Mark. And suddenly a great emotion swept through them.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be

saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

"Oh, John-Mark, we believe," they cried. "Baptize us that we may be saved."

Saul said little. Barnabas was pleased at his nephew's success, but Saul was not certain. What was Mark preaching after all but Peter's simple creed? He was not leading them out of Judaism. And besides, these sons of Tubal-Cain were a pent-up people. The earth about them weighed heavily on them. They embraced the new creed with a gust of passion. And passion passed.

They came to Paphos of Venus and were watching from the balcony of a convert's house the little bay where Aphrodite Anadyomene, light as foam, floated out of the sea. Barnabas was pointing out to his nephew the place where Mark's mother had played as a little girl.

"Barnabas," Saul said suddenly, "I have asked for an audience for us from Sergius Paulus."

"But, Saul," Mark said shrilly, "he is the governor. You should not. You should not. You will get us turned off the island. He is a great man. And we—"

"The proprætor is only a Roman citizen, like myself," Saul said curtly.

"But, Saul," Barnabas said, "is it worth it? This man with his Elymas, his private magician! He must be a weak, worthless man. A soul bound in superstition. What could we do with him?"

"I don't know, Barnabas," Saul said. "But I think that when a Roman of culture finds the emptiness of Greek gods, and tries to seek a mystery in the

East, he may be seeking us. And his magician, Barnabas, may be only a dark, wrong road he has turned down."

"But you will have to face Bar-jesus, the Elymas," Mark said, and there was fear in his voice. "I have heard of Bar-jesus, Saul. He is a master of devils. You know there are dark powers, Saul, for the ruin of souls. O Saul, do not fight with Bar-jesus."

"I know there are dark powers," Saul said. "The prince of the powers of the air, and lesser powers, and Satan the prince and captain of hell and his officers. But they must be faced and fought, John-Mark. I shall face and hunt Bar-jesus. I shall hunt Bar-jesus through the very gates of hell."

§ 2

The hot Cyprian day was over, and half the torrid Cyprian night was past. For all that outside a breeze was stirring, the air was heavy on the open loggia of the proprætor's house. Even the insects had tired of their loud flight. The tearing cry of a jackal came across the valley, and outside a yellow elongated moon, like a melon, hung in the dark branches of the cypress-trees. The cressets in the wall threw a gloomy light over the cold marble room. The resinous smoke of them mounted to the dark sky in spirals and coming between the ground and the sickly light of the moon threw writhing shadows like twisting serpents on the cold slabs.

The proprætor was a slight, weak man. In the great marble seat he seemed no more than a child in

a man's chair. The big head, and mean, streaked beard, and large goggling eyes, were grotesque on the frail body, and his voice had the shrill quality of a woman's. Saul, but for that he knew him to be the governor and a scion of the great Æmilian House, might have taken him for a clerk to a corn-factor of Alexandria. The apostle could sense beneath the bulging forehead a vast intellectual vanity, and a desire to compete for fame in philosophy and letters with his predecessor in Cyprus, the florid, thundering Cicero. Back of him was a favorite slave, and beside him on his left hand, Bar-jesus Elymas, and on his right his secretary, an ascetic, clever, and tired-looking man, who had to suffer the governor's vanity. On smaller chairs beside him were two women, nieces Saul understood them to be.

"Paulus, for so I shall call you," the governor said, "as you are known in Cilicia, the Greek form of Shaûl, or Saulos, being a barbarity, what you have proved to me is this: that there is a tradition in Israel from the earliest time that a Messiah should be born. You have also proved that the idea of divinity can be incarnate. But, Paulus, these are ideals. What exact proof is there that Jesus of Nazareth was this fullness of divinity, as you call him?"

"That after being dead and buried he arose again."

"Even that is moot. The value of evidence, Paulus, is an overrated matter. And even though he did walk again, what does that prove. Elymas here"—he turned to the magician—"has raised for me

the shade of Homer, to whom I have spoken. Yet Homer was no god, unless we use the word as a figure of speech, denoting his preëminence in poetry."

"What proof would you wish then?"

"It is agreed," said Sergius Paulus, "both in letters and oral tradition, that each god or great power who lived devised to his chief followers certain powers contrary to the working of natural law. Have you these powers?"

"Shall the Living God be proved," Saul said, "as by soothsayers who pollute for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread?"

"Now, now, Paulus," Sergius reproved him, "one cannot say that Bar-jesus here, or Jamnes or Jotaper of Paphos, or Apollonius of Tyana, or Simon the Magus, do wonders for hire. They take money, but it is not for money they do them. Indeed Apollonius of Tyana takes no money at all."

"This Jesus of Nazareth, most noble Sergius," said Bar-jesus, "was a brother of ours. He owed allegiance to the God of Flies. How he did his wonders I know."

"Do you?" Saul looked at him.

In the half-gloom he seemed a huge man, this Bar-jesus, as big as Barnabas; but where Barnabas was hard as iron, the magician was a soft and flabby jelly of a man. His vast belly came to a point under his red silk robe, and neck he seemed to have none. His black hair was oiled, and his head was short from chin to top, and broad from ear to ear. He had the almond-shaped eyes of those Chinese wanderers

from over the desert whom Saul had seen in Babylon; but where their eyes were subtle, the eyes of Bar-jesus were dark, heavy with evil, heavy with power. So broad and high were his cheek-bones that his small ears, face on, were not visible, and his wabbling, violet lips were painted a red that marked the pallid mask of his face like a wound. He was a storehouse of power, of black and evil power. His finely kept, heavily ringed hands had power in them. His husky, oily voice had power in it.

"Tell us then," Saul said. His own voice had become gentle, moving. His eyes sought the sorcerer's. The sorcerer's eyes were like leveled spear-heads against his own. The women by the governor leaned forward watching the two of them. One was a fair-haired, blue-eyed girl, with a face soft as a flower, but with eyes cold and hard as ice. The other was a heavy, black-haired woman with a man's face, a debauched man's face. The ascetic secretary looked at the lean, stern Saul in the Arab dress with a new interest. The slave drowsed behind his master's chair. He had seen so many magicians. Beside Saul, Barnabas stood, large and solid and silent as a statue; and Mark moved uneasily, wishing he were anywhere but in front of the sinister, corpulent figure of Bar-jesus.

"I will now tell you a mystery, most noble Sergius, most noble Flavia, most noble Ammiane"—the sorcerer's husky voice had a heavy power, as though it leaned against and compelled—"a deep secret among the Jews. It is written: Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain. It was by the name of

God, the Shem Hamphoras, the Sacred Ineffable name, that Moses opened the Red Sea, and slew the Egyptian host. It was engraved on Solomon's seal. And it was written on a stone in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

"The Holy of Holies in the Temple is protected by two brazen dogs, magical dogs. If any one penetrates into the Holy of Holies and comes out with the name, the magic dogs bark at him until he forgets it in fear, but Jeshua wrote it in parchment, and making an incision in his flesh carried it off in that manner, so that the brazen dogs of magic had no power against him."

"Now here," Saul laughed, "is a most apparent lie."

"How?" asked Bar-jesus.

"Outside the Holy of Holies there are no brazen dogs. I am of the greater Sanhedrim, Bar-jesus, and I know the Temple as I know the five fingers of my hand."

If Saul had expected the sorcerer to be abashed, he was mistaken. He laughed softly, and in the mirthless soft quality of his laughter there was more sense of power than ever. Saul felt that Bar-jesus despised Sergius so much, had him and his surroundings so firmly in his power, that being caught in a lie mattered nothing.

"I see you know what you speak of, Saul. It is a pleasure," he wheezed, "to speak to a doctor of the Law instead of to yokels and street-boys. But the power to whom I am dedicate does not permit me to tell its secrets."

"To whom are you dedicate?"

"*Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ*," said Bar-jesus, "to the Unknown God."

"The Unknown God is not unknown to me," said Saul. "He is Satan, the prince of the cohorts of hell. You serve him well."

"Satan or Adonai," said Bar-jesus quietly, "I serve a God and I have powers. I can make the ill well, and cast out demons. I can foresee the future and retell the past. I discover hidden treasure, and hinder armies. I invoke and command the dead. But you, Saul, all you have is words, empty promises."

"I have the power of withstanding evil."

"Show him, Elymas," said the proprætor. "Call up for a witness from the dead."

"I will call up David, king of Israel," said Bar-jesus, "and question him as to Jeshua."

"Do you," he told the slave, "go bring my four disciples, and bid them bring the sword, the wand, and the crucible."

To Saul it was all unreal, like the vision that had haunted him before his departure for Damascus. The marble loggia of the palace, the jaundiced, unhealthy man, the sibilant rustling of the cypresses. The slight proprætor in the judicial chair with the excited light in his eyes, the bored secretary. The women: the black-haired, debauched-looking woman with the man's face, who looked so evil, and yet had somewhere a heart in her; and the slight, fair, beautiful one who was dead, Saul felt, utterly dead. The vast heavy bulk of Bar-jesus, the ophidian eyes,

the painted mouth. He was like some great toad in a forgotten tomb. An owl hooted in the trees.

"Saul, what profit is this?" Barnabas whispered.

"You were right, Barnabas. But now we cannot leave. I won't forgive myself, Barnabas. This has cheapened us."

"Hush, brother," Barnabas said. "You meant well. And, perhaps, profit will come from it. But the boy, John-Mark, he is frightened."

"You know, Rabbi, of course," Bar-jesus wheezed, "that the Letters and the Numbers are everything. The Letters are from the Numbers, and the Numbers from the Ideas, the Ideas from the Forces, and the Forces from the Elohim. The synthesis of the Elohim is the Shema.

"The Shema is one, its columns are two, its power is three, its reflection giveth eight, which multiplied by three giveth the twenty-four thrones of wisdom. But a Sanhedrist, doubtless," jeered Bar-jesus, "knows that. You know the powers of the Flowering Rod of Aaron, the Cup of Joseph, the Sword of David, and the Shekel of Gold."

"I know only the power of the Lord Jesus," said Saul.

The four disciples entered, clothed in white. Their white garments were not whiter than their faces. And their eyes were empty, as if they had no souls or minds. They were all young boys, and Saul felt somehow, with a thrill of horror, that out of their bodies Bar-jesus had eaten their souls. His vast foul frame had battered on the hundreds of souls he had eaten. And the boys were only alive by

his wish. They had no life of their own. Somehow they had come into his power, and he had eaten their lives. They were not living; they were undead.

He took the sword from the eldest and made a wide circle with the point of it on the floor. Where it touched, it made a sharp line. With incredible swiftness the sorcerer moved around in a sweep that embraced them all. His feet seemed to leave the ground, and he moved as though in the air. He made a second circle outside the first, and in the interval between he wrote Hebrew letters with the point of the sword. Little braziers were placed and lit at the four corners of the compass, and though there was little wind they roared like furnaces. The disciples stood each between them with a drawn sword. A fifth white figure, which Saul had not seen before, slipped forward and handed Bar-jesus a crown of white parchment. He placed it on his head.

"Are all now within the circle?"

Saul stepped outside it. Barnabas followed him. Mark seemed too paralyzed to move.

"Come within the circle, Paulus," the proprætor pleaded. "Come and bring your friend within. Only in the circle is safety now."

"I fear nothing within or without the circle," Saul said. Barnabas said nothing, but his lips moved in a smile.

The sorcerer raised his sword skyward, and the torches on the wall went out.

"O Paulus," the governor pleaded, "come within the circle. Outside the circle, it seems not even the

warrant of the universal God serves. The art is permitted, and its consequences are permitted too. There was a priest of Ægæ who stood outside Bar-jesus' circle, a holy and an upright man, who refused to have aught of commerce with the dark art of the tombs. Paulus, he died."

"If a priest of Asklepios refused the protection of the circle"—Saul stood with folded arms—"how much more should we refuse it, who are disciples of the Son of God! Noble Sergius, do you believe it will be permitted to this dark necromancer to call up the king of Israel, and question him as to the Lord of Israel and of the world?"

"I know not, Paulus. Bar-jesus has done wonderful things. He had shown me the earth before there were either gods or man, burning mountains and vast plains of ice, and vast, clumsy shapes to which the elephant was as a woman's dog. The rank smell of them is in my nostrils still. Be not obstinate, Paulus. Come where there is safety. The priest of Ægæ died horribly."

"He was trampled into a red, shapeless mass," said the dark-haired woman. Her voice was soft and rich as wine.

The fair-haired woman laughed. Her voice was clear and silvery as a bugle.

"By the Hooves of the Goat," she said.

"The Cross of Christ Jesus is between me and harm," said Saul. "He lived and He died that the gates of hell should not prevail. Whoso believes in Him, as we believe, is out of hell's dominion. It is written: His dominion shall be also from one sea to

the other, and from the flood unto the world's end."

The proprætor shrugged his frail shoulders.

"I conjure you by the name Tetragrammaton Elohim, which expresseth and signifieth the grandeur of so lofty a majesty that Noah having pronounced it saved himself from the waters of the Deluge.

"I conjure you by the name Elohim Gibor, which Isaac having invoked, he was found worthy to escape from the sword of Abraham, his father.

"I conjure you and I exorcise you by the most holy name of Elvah Va-Dnath, which Jacob invoked and was found worthy to bear the Name of Israel, which signifieth Vanquisher of God, and he was delivered from the fury of Esau his brother. I conjure you by the most potent name of Shaddai. I conjure you by the most holy name of El Chai. By the name of Adonai Melekh.

"I conjure you by the two Tables of the Law, by the five books of Moses, by the seven burning lamps on the Candlestick of Gold before the face of the Throne of the Majesty of God, and by the Holy of Holies where the High Priest alone may enter. By Two, Five, and Seven I conjure you. Out of the earth, out of the sea, out of the depth of the Abyss of the Shades."

It seemed to Saul, as he stood there, that all he had known and felt of evil in his life had come hither to this marble room. A darkness, heavy as cloth, seemed to have dropped about him, and through it vaguely he could see the moon, like a guttering candle, and Barnabas, who stood beside him, he

could not see at all. Within the circle, all the faces had become dim except the face and figure of Bar-jesus. He stood there, sword upraised, in a sort of baleful majesty. And as the husky tones of his voice crept like some foul animal through the room, though there was no wind, the lights of the braziers seemed to fly toward him. Dimly he could see the brightness of the disciples' drawn swords.

"I conjure ye by Him who hath made the Heavens and the Earth and measured those Heavens in the hollow of His hand, and inclosed the earth with three of His fingers, and who is seated upon the Kerubim and upon the Seraphim. I conjure ye anew, Apostates from God, by Him who alone hath performed great wonders; by the Heavenly Jerusalem; by the most Holy Name of God in four letters, and by Him who enlightened all things and shineth upon all things by His venerable and ineffable name Eheieh Asher Eheieh, that ye come immediately to execute our desire."

About him in the thick sticky darkness, not with his eyes in his head, but with eyes that seemed to be all over his body, Saul seemed to sense the presence of horrors in the room. Serpents with men's faces, and men with the beards and shaggy legs of goats. And things like monstrous bats with the faces of women, peaked like foxes' masks. And women who were covered but for their mouths and breasts. And a child's head with a crown on it, and no body attached. And vast bloated things like Bar-jesus himself, and beings who were incredibly thin,

incredibly evil. In fancy he could hear the padding of their feet, the slow flapping of wings.

Bar-jesus seemed to grow larger. Sweat stood out in blue rivulets on his white face. He tore open the breast of his red silk garments and showed a flashing eye in precious stones there. He raised his left hand and on the palm of it showed an intricate silver star. His right hand inclined the sword from him.

"Here be the symbols of secret things, the standards, the ensigns, and the banners of God the Conqueror; and the arms of the Almighty due to compel the Aërial Potencies. I command you by their power that you appear to me with due humility."

About him Saul felt a padding, and a whispering and a snuffling as of things prowling about the circle seeking an entrance. He felt a touch of nausea, and a trembling in his legs. He moved his hand as if to touch Barnabas, and near his right shoulder he heard the ghost of a snarl. He stood still.

Bar-jesus waited. A look of baffled rage passed over his features as of some powerful, dissolute woman. And in that look one could see that the man was damned. He lowered his sword.

"In the name of Adonai the Eternal and Everlasting One, let each of you return unto his place; be there peace between us and you, and be ye ready to come when ye are called.

"Berashith Bara Elohim. In the beginning God created the heaven and earth. . . ."

And suddenly Saul saw the golden friendly moon.

"He has bested you, Bar-jesus," said the dark-haired woman.

"Perhaps," said Bar-jesus, "perhaps not. Perhaps I am Jew enough not to wish harm to my people. Perhaps also the moment is not happy. The Passing of the River is most difficult when the Moon is not in an airy sign, and a greater than I may have the Prince of Countenances in thrall at this hour. The most noble Sergius commands, the poor Bar-jesus obeys, but if the moment be not opportune—" he spread out his large beautiful hands.

"Pho! You are empty, Bar-jesus," the woman laughed.

The sorcerer laughed. "I do not mind your saying that, most noble and beautiful Flavia, for you only jest, but I would not have Saul think it. Though the hour of conjuration is not happy, Saul, yet I would have you see some powers. Shall I plunge my sword in this disciple's breast, and bring him back to life? Shall I show you hell, Saul?"

"Tricks are an abomination to me."

"Yet here is something will interest you of a surety." His voice was soft and unctuous, but behind it was hatred. His voice coming to Saul was like the tread of an army threatening. "Set lights. Girl, come here."

The slight figure that had given him the crown of the Magus came forward. He whipped her head-dress from her. She was like some lovely tropical flower. Through the olive of her skin the blood showed like a rose. Her eyes were dark and luminous and very large. Her oiled hair was like a close

cap to her head. He caught her hand and, cupping it, poured some liquid like quicksilver into the palm, out of a little leather bag.

"O daughter of Egypt," he said, "see this wise rabbi, this learned and fearless man."

Her eyes, turned on Saul, were vast and luminous and empty, like the eyes of an animal in the dark.

"Leave your mind in the palm of your hand, and still keeping it, go east and go west, go into old days and days that are to come." He laid his hand on her head. "Go!"

She did not move, but seemed to freeze where she stood. She was like a dead body, set upright by Egyptian craft. Bar-jesus looked into her hand.

"I see a boy on the quays of Tarsus. His eyes are toward the Greek islands, and his heart is toward the Greek islands. I am afraid he is more a Greek than a Jew, Shaûl."

"It needs no necromancy to tell that, Bar-jesus."

"I see a youth in the Temple at the foot of a teacher. Ah, it is the learned and venerable Gamaliel. His heart is not there."

"So?"

"I see a man on the road to Damascus. I see him prostrate on the sands. There is a light about him."

"See on!"

"But no, Brother Saul. We have all our mysteries. You would uncover mine," he said blandly, "but I shall not discover yours. Ho! what is this? Saul being beaten with rods. But why?"

"For spreading Light."

"A poor reward," Bar-jesus laughed, "but the truth. I grant it." He looked again. "Ah, here is Saul in prison. And there is more gray in your hair than now, Saul."

"It will not be a new experience."

"Ah, here is Saul at sea. Oi, what a sea, Saul! What waves! What horror! But you are lucky, brother! You escape. You were born on a Thursday, were you not, Saul? Tzadigel is your archangel, and Jupiter your planet. Blue your color." He leaned forward. "Ha! What is this?"

Under the magician's heavy repulsive face, there seemed to be a smaller face, the keen face of a hawk. All his body acquired bitterness as he watched.

"I see Rome burning," he said. "I see Jewish blood running in the gutters of Rome. Nazarene blood in the gutters of Rome. I see Simon Peter a dead man, but Saul is not dead."

"See no more."

"Saul is not dead," sneered the magician, "no!"

Saul gripped the girl by the shoulders. She was rigid as marble, immovable. Only her eyes moved, ghastlily, swinging in an orbit after Saul. Bar-jesus raised his hand.

"See no more," Saul said. And then as he was leaning forward: "Be blind!" The words seemed to come from his mouth as a missile. A force seemed to go out of his breast. Bar-jesus was looking into the girl's palm.

"But I can't see," he said. He straightened up slowly and turned toward Saul. He passed his hand across his eyes.

"Saul, I can't see."

"Now," said Saul, "where is the wicked one who is a ruler over you, and where is Satan standing at your right hand? Full of subtilty and all mischief, child of the devil, the hand of the Lord is upon you. You are blind."

Terror dawned on the man's face. It became a mask of fear. His mouth gaped, so that one could see the violet lips behind the line of scarlet paint. The eyes gaped. The creases of flesh fell away, and showed the small, terror-stricken eyes. He blundered forward and laid his hand on the shoulder of the black-haired woman. She rose calmly and struck him with the back of her hand across the mouth.

"Away, carrion," she said.

A panic seemed to strike Bar-jesus. He rushed forward, striking the wall, and turning made his way somehow into the garden. His body as it floundered through the shrubs was like the passage of a horse. A shuddering moan came from him. He floundered on. None paid any attention to him. They watched Saul with white, fear-stricken faces. Even Barnabas seemed afraid. John-Mark was whiter than his robe. The acolytes of Bar-jesus huddled together like puppies. The girl was rigid as a statue. From the garden came the crashing of Bar-jesus among the vines.

"Ho! Who will help me? Who will lead me?" he cried to the unanswering moon.

"Sergius Paulus," Saul said quietly, "in time past you have walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the

air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience—" His voice was clear, healthy, sane. It was compelling. It stood out like a thread of silver against the moaning of the blinded magician lying face downward in the vines.

"O God of Israel! O God of Israel, give me back my eyes!"

§ 3

Barely without the walls of Perga, the Pisidian mountain range rose like a wall, like the battlement of a castle, protected and threatening. The mountains had the cold blue of steel, and were surly against the sky. Beside them the great silver coil of the Cestrus ran, the golden-crested hoopoes strutting on the silver sand-banks, the white-breasted swallows skimming the rapids. The myrtle-trees and the acacias were shrill with green. The oleanders flung their field of crimson about the gray town. But before them the mountains threatened, the mountains with precipices sharp as a knife, with lonely wind-tortured lakes, where the wild swans dwelt, and the solitary stork. The passes there were either choked with snow or gushing in dangerous rapids. Lions and wolves and the snarling treacherous hyena abounded in the mountains; and men, more treacherous than the hyena and less pitiful than the wolf, roamed in bands so that the Roman police went about in fives. The gnarled pine-trees fought in the uplands against the barren volcanic rocks. . . . The gray baggage-camel, scenting the

misery before them, turned his snake-like head and moaned. John-Mark reined in his donkey.

"O my mother's brother," he said to Barnabas, "I will go no farther with this mad, terrible man."

Barnabas vaulted down from his black riding-camel and came toward him.

"Listen, John-Mark," he soothed him. "I am an old traveler, and I know it will not be as hard as it seems. In a week at most we will be in Pisidian Antioch, where there are many of our own people, and, John-Mark, we will need you there. See how well you did in Cyprus. You will do as well in Antioch. And you will be so pleased to have done it, and you will tell Peter."

"But there are wild beasts and robbers, Uncle Joseph, and the people are terrible. They kill and stake out wolves and lions. They are *amme-haretze*, people of the earth. And, Uncle Joseph, Saul will be killed, and he will have us killed, too. Uncle Joseph, he wants to be scourged and in prison. He wants to be stoned. Uncle Joseph, why couldn't we go to Alexandria?"

Saul had cantered back on his mountain pony.

"What's this?" His voice was cold as the mountain wind.

"It's nothing, Saul," Barnabas said.

"But it is, Saul." John-Mark faced him. "I will go no farther."

"Are you afraid?"

"I can see no profit in this journey. There is nothing in the mountains but wild men. And if

we aren't killed by lions or robbers we may be stoned in Lystra or Antioch."

"Probably," Saul said.

"Look, Uncle Joseph," the boy cried in a fury of pain. "I told you. Saul is mad. There is nothing here, and yet he goes on to be scourged. Why couldn't we have remained in Cyprus? Why couldn't we have gone to Alexandria?"

"Who wants to come, comes, and who wants to, goes back," Saul said quietly, but his face was white with anger. "As for me, I go on."

"Saul, he's only a boy—"

"I said: I go on." He swung his mount around, recklessly as an Arab, and went back up the mountain pass.

"O mother's brother," John-Mark pleaded, "come back with me, and let this madman go his way. See, Uncle Joseph, you were all so happy before he came. And surely Peter is right, not he. Peter loved the Lord. And the Lord loved Peter. Come back to Peter. Saul is a Greek and a citizen of Rome. No harm will befall him. Come back to my mother's house."

"I am sending you back, John-Mark," Barnabas said. "When you return to Jerusalem, tell them I sent you back."

"But aren't you coming?"

"No, John-Mark," Barnabas said quietly, "I'm not coming. I shall go on with Saul. Peter loved the Lord, I know, but Saul understands him, knows the work. The Lord loves Peter, perhaps, more

than he does Saul. But Saul is the leader. John-Mark, whether he is mad or sane, I follow him. Little nephew, you are more at home dreaming on the Mount of Olives, or arguing in the Temple, than with us. We are hard, fighting men, Saul and I, and journeys like this are for us. I should have left you in Cyprus or sent you back from there, little nephew, but I was selfish. I wanted to have you with me, because you have so much of your mother in your face.

"Have you money? Have you everything? Good-by, then, John-Mark. God bless you! I must hurry, or Saul will think he is left alone."

CHAPTER XII

§ I

HE thought, looking at her, and looking back on his life, that he had never imagined, much less seen, anything so fair as this sweet Greek lady, this young Greek girl. Her bound hair was white as flax, and her eyes were gray, like lake-water. There was something clean about her, like her own mountain air. The dyed and perfumed women of the Orient were as distant from her as pole from pole. There she was, clean as a mountain boulder, scented slightly with vervain. She looked at him as he would like a man to look at him, unthinking of difference in brain, of difference in race.

She said: "You see, Saul"—she had a clear ringing voice, low, but like a small bell of silver—"your Jesus of Nazareth was a beautiful youth, wise and very beautiful. But the Adonis of Phrygia was wise and beautiful, too. And your Anastasis, Saul, your resurrection. Each year the brown grass turns blue with tulip and hyacinth. The red anemone and the yellow marigold come forth. The nightingale, who has gone none knows whither, returns and sings. The trees clothe their bare branches. Is this not Anastasis? And yourself, Saul, you lie with husband or wife and a child is born, and as it becomes an artic-

ulate speaking mortal, in it, or perhaps later in its children, you see yourself arisen. Perhaps we know Adonis never lived, but the resurrection is before our eyes."

"But is that satisfying to you, Thekla?"

"When a young girl, no. But later, perhaps yes. You preach virginity, Saul. But— In love, I think—I don't know it yet—there may be something that will make dissolution tolerable. The great poet of Lesbos, Saul, sings of love, as though it were sunrise. But one marries a poor lout. . . . Though, Saul, I might see how one could grow old and gentle and resigned, and be glad when the day's task was over."

"I know," Saul said. In the Iconian dusk, under the apple-trees, there was a shining in his face. "I can see, as I can understand nearly all things when the gift is with me, how one could live from kiss to kiss, and, lying breast to breast, forget how many moons have risen over the mountains, and how often the apple-trees have pushed out their furry buds. For love could be like wine, cheering and sleepful. And a new love could put away the pain of the old as a beaker of wine drives away the pain of last night's debauch. You would be living in a drunkard's world, an unreal, non-existent world. The worlds of love, and wine, and thought even, are non-existent."

"What world is existent?"

"The world of God."

"Then we are back where we started." She seemed a little weary. "For you have your God, Saul, and I have, or had, mine. There are many gods."

"I have no god of my own, nor have, nor had you. There is one God, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. The star in the heavens, the little grass in the garden, are his work."

"That is a story for children, Saul. All who preach the Unity say that. Your stars, your grass, Zeno of Piræus, so old and wise, admitted in the end that it all was an accident."

"An accident of Whose? . . . Is it a story for children? Then you are a child, Thekla. Listen."

She lifted to him her delicate girl's face with the clear boyish eyes. In each graceful, unstudied gesture he saw in her the generations born free. She was like some girl of the days of Pericles, so much antique poise and beauty did she have.

"What Zeno of Piræus or Euclid of Alexandria thought matters so little after all. Thought, Thekla, is as mechanical as the five fingers of my hand. As mysterious, but as mechanical. Have you seen those Chinese water-clocks, Thekla? Thought is like that. I know intellects. I have seen them bare in Jerusalem, the doctors of the Law weaving their arguments more intricate than the Persians' game of prince and princess, and priest, and soldier, and yokel. There is something terrible about an intellect laid bare, Thekla. It is like a snake. Beady-eyed and cold."

"But, Saul, what is there?"

"There is this, Thekla, which I cannot put into words, so futile is the vocabulary of philosophers. A player strikes a high chord upon the harp, and your mind and heart catch it, and for a while you

live in a clear air like the little wind of springtime, or like a rill of mountain water, or the new-born moon. If your heart can climb so high, Thekla, you know that God lives, and that we do not die. Beyond these things for a surety I know nothing, but I think when we die, we are stronger, happier. We are like folk in a fog here, but there will be sunshine. The idea of God will become clearer to us when we die. I think there will be work there, and problems, and joy, and, perhaps, sorrow—the jewel-studded heaven is as vulgar to me as a merchant's greasy coins—but we shall be stronger there, and wiser, and better. The soul that fumbles like a nestling in our bosom here will there be winged and young and beautiful. But you must catch the note, Thekla. And it is not easy. The liquid flute of God is blotted out by the throbbing of the dancers' drums."

"It is not easy, Saul, then, to hear it."

"It is for that reason I preach chastity, Thekla. To draw people from the mad thunder of the dancing drums. Love drains the precious liquor of life that the unfledged souls need for themselves. The soul is like a child under its mother's heart, Thekla. It needs quiet, and it needs life."

"That is not new, Saul. Apollonius of Tyana preaches chastity."

"You see, Thekla, that even one blind as Apollonius is aware of that. He is wise after his manner. In science, in magic, I grant, there is none greater than he, excepting our Lord Jesus, the Man sent from Heaven. But here is the difference, Thekla. I know of Apollonius' chariot through the air, I

know of Apollonius' speaking trumpets that tell him in Alexandria what is said in Rome. I grant they are great wonders. But—the Lord Christ Jesus never did wonder for Himself, or accepted any vanity. He never did a miracle except to help some one. Apollonius knows that the soul is born in chastity, but he will not see that it lives through charity. All the chastity in the world is useless without charity. In ages to come the name of Apollonius will be a wonder to school-boys and shallow men, but the name of Christ Jesus shall live in the world's heart, until the world itself cracks like a nut in the furnace of God."

She rose. In the west the stars were coming out. The apple-trees spread their blossoms about her, but the apple-blossoms on the ground were not whiter, sweeter, than her naked foot in its gold-clasped sandal. The apple-blossoms in the air were not more delicate than her chiseled Grecian face.

"I must go, Saul. My mother, Theoclia, will be worried for me. To the old, Saul, new teachings, new faiths, are terrible. To leave the old for the new faith is like leaving one's country for a strange land. You go to-morrow?"

"We go to Lystra and Derbe, but return by here and Antioch."

"I shall see you when you return. Saul, I cannot see, but I can feel a little. There is a little note," she smiled, "somewhere in the air."

Yet still she did not go. She stood among the gnarled friendly apple-trees, in the friendly dusk, a figure such as the Greeks loved to think of, as Arte-

mis pure as flame, as Diana chaste as the clean air.

"You speak of marriage, Saul, and yet— Would your word be worth anything about it if you had never been—?" She paused.

"I have been married."

"Are—?" She spoke as some young boy might have spoken, frank and yet shy.

"No," Saul said.

"You will think me vulgar, past pardon—" She hesitated. The slaves at the garden had seen her rise, and were now lighting the spitting pine-torches, and their red resinous flame showed in the dusk. Her cheek was red. "If it were an unhappy marriage," she said quietly, "then, you would still not be an authority to be taken, do you see?" She faltered a little.

Saul paused. "I have never spoken of it," he said quietly, "to Barnabas even, my friend. But it was not unhappy." He broke a spray of apple-blossom and looked at it. "I am a little unhappy about it now, for when I was married I had not the charity I preach now. I am afraid I didn't understand."

She laid her hand on his arm, light as a poised butterfly.

"May I thank you?"

"That is my work," Saul said.

"Not for that, though for that, too. But for letting me be so rude, and not hindering me. Please forgive my blundering, but—" She waited for a moment to find words, and then went off quickly, as if ashamed. Saul stood quietly looking after her,

holding the broken branch of apple-blossom in his hand.

§2

He had left Iconium when the apple-blossoms were dropping through the soft Asian air; and now, when he was returning, once more spring was here. Through the woods as he rode along on his big white mule, Barnabas walking beside him, the ground was a blue lake of hyacinths, with here and there islands of golden crocuses. White storks flapped lazily overhead, and the cuckoo called. The peasant drove his bullocks with the frame plow or wooden harrow through the brown earth, and behind the sowers speckled partridge fought with crested lapwing for tithe of seed. And now and then Saul stopped with wonder, for here and there out of brown soil or reddish moss a pear-tree reared its pillar of silver. Like soft fine dust of silver it rose in the air. Like some delicate fountain of silver. Or like some small shy cloud that had lost its way.

It seemed but yesterday since he left, and so much had happened. He had been hailed, with Barnabas, as a god in Lycaonia, and there he had felt the black wings of the Angel of Death brush his shoulder. He had thought at the moment it was nothing, but the sling-shot of the Jewish assassin had all but ended his life, and in the bitter cold of Derbe the throbbing headaches had all but driven him mad. Never had spring been so long in coming, and even

when it had come Barnabas was hard to persuade that he could travel.

"Wait until the heat of midsummer is past, Saul."

But Saul fretted for the black buffaloes among the yellow lilies, and the humming bees, and the night-ingale calling from the myrtles, and the wild asses of the moors who look at travelers with their mild shy eyes, and then suddenly scamper off, their hoofs like the rumble of drums. He fretted for the sunshine, golden and warm as wine.

"Our people at Iconium and Antioch, Barnabas," he said, "if we leave them too long, the pagan priests may get them." He worried. "Barnabas, give me the air in my face, and I shall be well again."

"If you die, Saul, what of the whole Church?"

"I shall not die."

"Saul, what of the Jews of Antioch and Iconium? They will waylay you again. This time the aim may be better, or they may use the knife."

"I shall avoid them, Barnabas. I shall go into no synagogue. Barnabas, let us get away from this dreary steppe. The black mountains of Armenia are weighing on my heart."

"Saul, stay here with Gaius in Derbe, and I will go to Lystra and Iconium, and send the boy Timothy to you from Lystra."

Saul said nothing. He turned his eyes to the wall. Barnabas looked at Gaius, their host. It was so strange to see the man of iron weak and fretful as a child. Gaius nodded to the big Cypriote. Barnabas leaned down and put his arm around Saul.

"Very well then, Saul. You shall go. But you go

as Saul of Tarsus, the Roman citizen, not as Paulus. I am going to bring you to Syria alive and well."

§3

Coming back to Iconium now he felt the same power in him as when he left. And somehow he knew it to be connected with the sweet Greek girl. He had thought of her—he made no secret of it to himself—all through the winter. There was some bond between them. He had asked himself harshly once, did he love her? Do you, Saul, after preaching chastity, wish to lie with this woman? He nearly laughed at the absurdity of it. Great God! of course not! So he didn't love her, that was certain. But just as certain was that there was a bond.

He had never seen, he thought, any one who appeared to him so fair. She was so slim, so light on her feet; she was like a gazelle of the Syrian plains, who looks at you, poised like a runner. She had not the heavy female legs, the short uncomely legs of Syrian women. She was like some fancy of a Greek sculptor come to life, swift and gracious, supple as the bending barley, swift as channel-water. In the East all women were unclean, but about this Greek girl there was no uncleanness. For all her rounded limbs and young breasts, she was sexless as a young boy.

But what he liked most of all about her was her slow, inquiring mind. Her mind was clear as her gray eyes, clear as well-water, deep as a well. And there was no fear in her. She had no consciousness

of him as a man, no more than he had consciousness of her as a woman. He felt that he could adventure in mysticism and that she would follow him. He felt that after a while, indeed, he could sit quietly and think, and she think with him, those strange thoughts for which there are no words, or perhaps they are not thoughts at all, those states of being that come with the sight of a majestic tree, or the slow sailing moon, or the wonder of the wild swans flying homeward toward the Pole. There was some bond between them, but what it was he couldn't tell.

Through the myrtle-trees, down the flowering road to Lystra last summer, her gray eyes had seemed to accompany him, and he was so cheery some of the way that Barnabas looked at him in amazement, having always seen him as a leveled, threatening spear, an irresistible blue-headed spear.

"You seem so young, Saul," Barnabas told him. "You seem younger than I have ever known you. You are part Jew, part Greek, part Arab. Subtly Jewish, dreamingly Greek, fanatically Arab. But to-day you are all Arab. An Arab horseman on the plains."

"It is the mountain air, Barnabas."

They passed out of a region of trees and flowers into a land of salt marshes, where the salt was crusted like snow. Reeds and spear-grass and flowering cane made a jungle of the land, and shepherds kept close to their bleating flock of goats, while there was occasionally heard a rustle or crash in the reeds which might have been a shepherd's dog or might have been a wolf. . . . Lystra rose like a mountain

out of the plain, a black city on a black rock with a sluggish river running through it to the marshes. Through the grove of dark green trees the white temple of Jupiter showed against the black of the town. The white seated figure of Jupiter was vast among the trees, with Mercury poised beside him as though ready to spring forward at his behest like a runner. They were so still, so dead, so magnificent in death, the blind dead Greek gods. . . .

The streets were narrow, tortuous, and mean; and except for the faces of the Roman garrison, or of the traveling traders, the faces of men and women were vacant. Centuries of intermarriage had made them all but idiots. There was a stillness in Lystra that spoke of a dying town. It was only when they got into the darkness of the bazaars and descended from their mounts that they noticed how terrible was the population about them. They slavered out of crooked mouths. Their ungainly arms hung limply toward their knees. Here stood one with a diminutive body and a vast head. Here was a dreadful goiter. There an idiot, the hairs on his chin like the hairs on a gooseberry. They marveled with their weak, vacant faces, at Saul's quick firm tread, at the comely majestic Barnabas. A girl broke into a high shrill laugh, that was more a scream than a laugh. Out of the dark bazaars they came as from some demon's prison-house, while in their grove of myrtles, their gods, Jupiter and Mercury, were dead.

The apple-cheeked, black-haired Jewish trading-folk crowded about them, offering hospitality, in-

viting them into the synagogue, but there was still in the air the thunder of the excommunication at Iconium. Barnabas shivered a little. He would never forget Saul in the market-place in Iconium, in the dusk of the Sabbath evening preaching to the Greeks, his keen hawk's face dominating the crowd, his voice sharp as a bugle:

"We speak the wisdom of perfection: a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, for that would be nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God, a mystery hidden and fixed by Him for our glory, before the world began. . . ."

While from the synagogue, in the Street of the Potters, near-by, the ram's horns blew, calling on Israel, and the chazzan pronounced the *shemmata* against Saul and Barnabas, the final dreadful excommunication, in sonorous cumbersome Hebrew:

"When they shall be judged, let them be condemned; and let their prayers become sin.

"Let their days be few; and let others take their office.

"Let their children be fatherless, and their wives be widows.

"Let their children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

"Let the extortioner catch all that they have. . . ."

A pain, more he thought than he ever felt before, came into Barnabas' heart. Here then was the end. Since Abraham all his people had been Jews, his father, with his blue-fringed praying-shawl, his

mother who set out the flowers and candles and wine for the Sabbath. All that was over. Wherever they went now they were outcasts from the orthodox. Even the unorthodox would look askance at them. No more would they be welcomed in the ghettos of the towns they visited. And Peter, how would Peter take this excommunication?

"But God has made it known to us through the spirit of Jesus, which searches all things, even the deep things of God," Saul went ahead quietly. "Who among men knows the things of a man but the spirit of the man who is in him? And so the things of God are known only to the Spirit of God. . . . Men whose minds are darkened will not receive the things of the Spirit of God; and call them foolishness, not understanding them. . . ."

"Hear ye, all Israel," came the chazzan's rolling note.

"Let there be none to extend mercy unto them, neither let there be any to favour their fatherless children.

"Let their posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. . . ."

Yes, that was the end. . . .

Barnabas thanked the Jews of Lystra for their offers of kindness, and besought Saul with a glance not to interfere. Saul turned away with a smile. He called to a Roman soldier and asked him about accommodation for the cattle. He could hear a Jewish voice calling to Barnabas.

"Well, tell us. Tell us. Don't keep it to yourself. We should know."

"I shall, therefore," Barnabas was saying in his gentle voice, "lay before you, not as a teacher but as one of you, a few things by which you may, on many accounts, be moved. . . ."

He left them to Barnabas. For Saul, Judaism was dead. Their excommunications, *neziphah*, *nidoui*, or *cherem*, meant nothing. Judaism was a great monster, threshing in its death-throes. What converts he could get among Jews were very few, and they nearly always relapsed back into Mosaism. No interdiction would keep him out of synagogues, for there he might find Greek proselytes who were seeking the light. But for the Jews proper, he was finished with them. If Barnabas thought he could convert Jews, let Barnabas try. They are all prisoners of the Temple, Saul thought, the visible or invisible Temple. Only the Greeks and the Romans are free. . . .

He had never, not even on the night when he had faced Bar-jesus, felt vitality humming in him in such a singing current as he felt it to-day. And somehow his very sight was changed. The wretched folk about him he saw as a reproach to God. Why had nobody done anything for them? The Roman soldiery could do little, but the Jewish merchants had physicians among them. Why hadn't they done something? The thunder of excommunication was still in his ears; and he thought, with a sneer, that to Israel all peoples were the earth out of which the tree of Israel grew, the dung which nurtured it; and the more they rotted the better for Israel. God! . . . He had seen misery and disease everywhere,

but to-day he was seeing it through the eyes of the calm Greek girl who loved beauty. He could imagine her absolute physical pain at the sight of these twisted folk, her mental pain that such things should be. They were an abnegation of the omnipotent God Saul preached, and she would turn back to the gentle, beautiful Greek gods, who were more beautiful than humans, but hardly more powerful.

"But do you see, Thekla"—he found himself arguing with her as though she were there—"these people could be well if they wanted to. Their souls are dead. There is nothing that the soul cannot do, with faith in God. They could be beautiful. You are beautiful because you think of beauty and practise beauty. And so did your father, and your Greek mother, Thekla."

He saw her against the gnarled, vacant-eyed people, beautiful as a pear-tree, gracious and kind and enduring as a green bay-tree. He saw her across a mist of unbeauty and pain that arose from the dead-witted folk. They crowded about him, drawn by his vitality, drawn by his dignity and strength. They stood apart and gaped at the huge figure of Barnabas, not understanding, but savoring the roll of his sonorous Syro-Chaldaic speech, that was like a faint thunder. As he moved here and there Saul saw a cripple resting apart, a man with tortured, appealing eyes, a man whom torture and thought had made wise.

"How long have you been crippled, brother?"

"Since my mother's womb."

He did not need to speak, so mobile, so eloquent

were his eyes. Thought and soul seemed to roam about in the prisoned body and to look through his eyes. Saul felt drawn toward him as magnetic iron is drawn to the Pole. He looked at him. His eyes gripped the man's eyes. There was in the cripple's eyes the appealing look of a dog who turns over on his back.

"But you can walk, you know. If you only have faith, you can walk." His eyes still held the man, and he felt as if he were holding him in mid-air in his hands. "Will you have faith?"

"I have faith."

"Then—walk!" The power he had felt accumulate within him on the night he struck Bar-jesus blind was there now, and it seemed to spring forth from him, as it had sprung that night in Cyprus. And with a sudden movement the man leaped in the air.

"Come to me," Saul told him.

The man came to him on uncertain feet, as a child would come who has not yet learned to walk, swaying, stumbling, and then coming forward with a little run. Saul held him up lightly with his fingers.

"Listen," he said, "you will never be a cripple any more."

"I shall never be a cripple any more."

"See to him, his friends," Saul ordered. "He must learn to walk."

He strolled back to where Barnabas was talking. The crowd had become bigger. They stood a little off, talking. And then suddenly some men ran away. Their swift feet rang out like hammers on the paved road.

"Ho, son of exhortation!" Saul said to Barnabas. But Barnabas was deep in his theme. The rosy-checked, jet-eyed Jews were listening to him with the keen attention of hawks. Beneath their foreheads Saul could scan their minds clicking like machines. Testing, going on a little, waiting, going on. Click! good! Click-click! Wait a minute. Yes! Click-click!

"But because it might hereafter be said," Barnabas was arguing, "that Christ was the son of David: therefore David fearing and well knowing the errors of the wicked, saith: the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies my footstool.

"And again Isaiah speaketh in this wise. The Lord said unto Christ my Lord, I have laid hold on his right hand, that the nations should obey before him, and I will break the strength of kings.

"Behold how doth David and Isaiah call him Lord, and the Son of God. But let us go yet further—"

Beside Barnabas, drinking in his words, a boy was standing. He was sturdy, with fair hair, and brown, freckled face. His eyes were wide apart and gray, and his mouth wide and boyish. He had such dignity for a boy, and Saul sensed so much strength in him that he laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Ho, lad," he asked, "what name have you?"

"My name is Timothy, sir."

"Are you a Son of the Law?"

"No, Rabbi, a proselyte of the gate only."

"Your father?"

"My father is dead, sir, and I live with my mother Eunice, and my grandmother Lois."

"Are they, too, proselytes of the gate?"

"Yes, sir. But they do not know what to believe."

"So?"

From afar off came the clash of cymbals and the booming of Temple gongs, and the loud blast of horns shuddered in the air. The shuffle of feet and the shouting of people. "Ho, Jupiter and Mercury! The gods have come to Lystra in the shape of men. Ho, Jupiter the thunderer, and Mercury the swift, the healing!" They capered like young goats on rocks. They danced grotesquely. The white-robed priests were statues of dignity moving in their midst, and as a bass to the sounding horns came the lowing of young bulls. They were oiled and brushed until they shone like bronze. About their thick necks and polished horns a riot of flowers showed, white and yellow lilies, red of rose and blue of convolvulus, green glossy leaves of bay and myrtle. "Ho, Hermes! Ho, Zeus Poliouchos! The gods have come again to Lycaonia as they came in ancient time." They danced around Saul and Barnabas. "This is Mercury who healed the crippled one, and this vast man is Jupiter."

"What is this?" Barnabas asked.

"They are going to sacrifice the bulls to you," laughed a Jewish wool-merchant. "They think you are gods."

"See, Mercury!" the dancers called; "on his heels, beneath his rider's boots, there are little wings of gold. His body is of beaten silver, and he has breasts

of gold. Beneath his tunic he has a body of silver and gold—”

“O Saul,” Barnabas called in panic. “Say something. Do something.” The priests led forward the bulls, chanting. They bared keen sacrificial knives.

“O sirs,” Barnabas implored the priests, “why do ye these things? Saul, speak to them.”

“His torso is of worked silver, and the nipples of his breast are fine rubies,” the dancers sang. “His bare breast is golden.”

Barnabas was white with panic. The grinning, saturnine Jews looked on with quiet laughter. The ancient, doddering priests tottered about with firewood and censers. Among them all Saul stood in a quietness that was thundering. He dropped his cloak behind him. He rent his linen tunic from edge to neck, and stood with his naked torso before them. There were red lines on back and breast from the synagogue whips.

“See,” he said quietly. “We also are men of like passions with you.”

He pointed to the garlanded bulls, the oiled and flowered bulls, the censers, the offerings of fruit.

“We preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities, unto the living God.” His voice was low and resounding. It shuddered compellingly through the air like the stroke of a bell, like the note produced by the clapper on a golden bell. “Which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that are therein.”

The young priests gaped at him with their open, idiots’ mouths, and the old priests blinked at him

with their aged rheumy eyes. They understood nothing. Outside the empty symbolism of their ritual they understood nothing. The people stood dreamily, lulled by the music, the bell-branch of his voice. The sturdy Greek boy was standing behind him holding his rent tunic and his dropped burnous. The smiles had gone from the lips of the Jewish traders. They watched him with the narrowed eyes of cats.

"Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways."

A garlanded bull broke from the attendant priest and came toward him. It sniffed his hand. He placed his hand on its head, between the shining, polished horns.

"Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

The people of the town nudged one another, and leered at one another with crooked Asian smiles. "See, he is Hermes. He says he is not Hermes, but he speaks with the tongue of Hermes." They looked at his shining uplifted face, and at the bronze beflowered bull quiet under his brown hand. "Of a surety he is Hermes, the swift, the healing. Even the dumb beast knows it."

§ 4

He thought: never in his life had he been so happy. Daily he went among the Lystrians, and by drawing attention to flower and tree and star, he

strove to wake into their consciousness the idea of one God. The old priests of the Temple looked at him wonderingly, not quite sure. Maybe a new god had arisen of whom they had not heard in Phrygia, or maybe some ancient forgotten god had awakened out of age-long sleep, refreshed, gigantic. At any rate there was room for many gods. . . . The mother of Timothy had asked them to stay with her, and Saul was glad he could help her in commerce. The family had vast spaces of the Phrygian moor where sheep wandered, and he was amazed at the loss that took place in the weaving and marketing of the wool. She was a comely, gentle person, with great dignity; and in Alexandria on a trip into Egypt she had heard of Jesus. She quarreled with Saul in her quiet way over his reading of the Messiah. To her Jesus was a warm live person, love coming from Him like rays from the sun. To Saul He was a great idea, she said, an idea that would revive the world. But she would not give up her human being for his idea. They quarreled in a gentle way, the old mother Lois, red and small and sweet as an apple, taking neither side. But young Timothy would fight hotly for Saul.

Saul, with his knowledge of weaving, insisted on making Eunice's estate more efficient, of writing letters to his father's factors in Perga and Rome.

"Eunice, it ought to yield three times more than it's doing."

"But what would I do with it, my dear?"

"I don't know," Saul said. And then: "You might give it to the poor."

"Yes, I can do that."

Barnabas was amused at Saul's taking such an interest in affairs. "You are becoming more human, Saul."

"Am I, Joseph? I am glad. I must become more human still."

All the house was merry. It occurred to Barnabas, and he had noticed it before, that those on whom Saul's influence rested were free and happy. They were bigger, taller than before. Such converts as Peter made had a rapt look as though they were transported out of themselves: His own neophytes had a look of puzzled concentration from mulling over his subtle readings of the Scriptures. But Paul's catechumens were great-limbed and free. It was as though he had given them the freedom of the starry roads. They girt their loins and looked out on the world as mariners look out over the waters, keen-eyed and confident. And they were merry from goodness of heart.

Saul had a knack of making his hearers see what he wanted, more by carrying them off their feet into a rapt trance than by description of words. He would tell Timothy and Eunice of Damascus, the oasis of Syria; and Petra, red as a rose; of the Nile, with the patient buffalo turning the water-wheel; of the black mountains of Moab, and the blackness of the Dead Sea, and the white cranes flying overhead toward Africa. He would tell them of the people he had known; of his Uncle Joachim, so uncouth and so good-hearted; so apparently vulgar, so fine within, and now he was dead. "He was like a tree

outside a house a child grows up in. To the child's eye it touches the stars, and though the child grows up, yet the tree is always gracious and flowering and melodious with birds. It is always a friend. It is a landmark you think of in Arabian desert or Roman square, the tree outside your father's door. And one day the husbandman cuts it down and the face of the world is altered. And you discover that the tree did not grow in the earth. It grew in your heart. . . ." He told them of Caiaphas, cold and deadly as a snake, his horned blue bonnet, his veiled hands. He was evil, cold absolute evil. He told them of the monstrous Bar-jesus, the magician of Crete. He, too, was evil, but not so evil as Caiaphas. He told them of Thekla.

"She is like woman as God intended her. Splendidly frank, cool, and beautiful. . . . If only she could believe!"

Eunice laughed. She had a merry, comely face, a small round face with flashing teeth and eyes.

"You should marry her, Saul. And then you can show us what a Christlike family would be. Would you marry her?" The face of Timothy was clouded.

"See Timothy!" Eunice smiled. "Boys begrudge their heroes to wives. They cannot have married heroes." And Timothy flushed.

"I never think of her in the way of marrying; I think only of her keen Greek soul."

"Yes, but, Saul, a keen Greek soul goes often hand in hand with a passionate Greek heart."

"She is not that sort of woman, dear Eunice."

"No?" Eunice smiled.

What charm was in the air of Lystra he did not know, but everywhere was friendship. Even the aged priest of Jupiter listened to him kindly, admitting that Jesus might be a god. "For the heavens are wide, man of Tarsus, and the gods are hospitable gentlefolk."

"But cannot you see, venerable father, that there can only be one God?"

"That is philosophy, Paulus. That is not religion."

Saul tried on the question of sacrifices. Could they not be abolished? Would it not be a cleaner ritual?

"Apollonius of Tyana has preached everywhere against it. Indeed, many of the Syrian temples sacrifice no more."

"Apollonius of Tyana, my son, is most wise." But he would not be persuaded.

"And, ancient father," Saul appealed to the national weakness for saving, "it would be more economical."

"The doves and the bulls and the lambs are gifts, my son. And if devotees get out of the custom of giving sacrifices, they might forget to give anything."

"But surely you put religion above money."

"When I was young, Paulus, money and religion were to me as far asunder as the Poles. And now I am old I can see how they can quite comfortably live in the same house. Quite comfortably." He stroked his long beard. "And I am not an evil man."

With only one section of the town was he on terms of enmity, and that was with the Jewish traders. They resented his ascendancy over the

natives. They were angered at his ceremonial laxity. They had heard from Iconium that he had been excommunicated, but even an excommunicated man should have his pride, and not eat as Gentiles do. Also, he was teaching the weavers and the sheep-farmers that there was a certainty of much greater profit in sending their wares to Perga than in selling them to the Jewish factors on the spot. Saul knew in his heart that this was of little consequence to be compared to the scandal of an excommunicated Jew preaching a false Messias to the heathen. . . . They avoided him. But he noticed some of the rulers of the synagogue pointing him out to a dapper young Jew, with ruddy cheeks and cold, malignant eyes. The man might have been a wrestler or professional athlete of some sort, boxer or swordsman. But Saul thought nothing of it.

He was returning from a talk with the old priest in the grove of Jupiter when close to the city wall he saw a score or more of the local colony. They stood still as if waiting for him. Among them was the young athlete. He seemed back of them on the outskirts of the crowd. He raised his hand to his forehead as he met them.

"*Schalôm aleka!*" he greeted. "Peace!" But there was no "*Aleka schalôm*" in reply.

An elder stopped him.

"Ah, Shaûl, have you been preaching the Nazarene as the Son of God to the priest of Jupiter?"

"And was he not?" Saul answered. "Is it not written: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?"

"But the Nazarene was hanged."

"Though slain on a tree, God raised him from the dead. There are many who are his witnesses. Is it not also written: Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption?"

They growled against him with a growl as of some monstrous beast, blind and furious with anger. Their growl was like the twangings of bowstrings. They crowded around in a half-moon, grumbling, furious. It seemed as if they were lashing themselves into a rage. There was nothing spontaneous about it. It all seemed concerted somehow. Afar off, quiet, smiling, saying nothing, was the young boxer. He seemed amused. More came up, some Jews, some were ragamuffins of the town, hangers-on in wine-shops, horse-boys, camel-drivers. . . . There was the bleakness of treachery about the meeting, a feeling of danger, as of blue, bleak ice.

The hour was well chosen. It was noontide, and the dwellers in the city were resting from their morning's work in the bazaars. Afar off, in the turret of the city gate, Saul could see the Roman sentry, stiff as a statue. Should he call for help? No! That would be undignified, and would also rob him of his ascendancy over the Lystrans.

"If this be true, then it is a secret of Israel," said the old man. "A valuable and deep secret for Israel. If untrue, then it is a quarrel in Israel. Surely either way it is not a thing for Greeks to hear."

The half-moon of enemies came a little closer to him. He could feel their brittle anger like a cold wind. Their eyes were like knives.

"Has not Isaiah witnessed," he answered, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth?"

There was a groaning and a hissing, and from the edge of the crowd a pebble was thrown, striking him on the shoulder. Some others bent down for stones and threw them, some missing him, some striking him lightly. And then in an instant they had retreated and all were stoning him. There was something grotesque in the dignified figures leaning down to pick up stones, and flinging with short ineffective gestures. A shard struck him on the cheek and drew blood, but for the greatest part their aim was wild, and when the stones struck him they were as thrown by children, so futile was it. He felt it was all so undignified.

"So, ye learned elders! ye fathers of Israel! This is how ye argue. With stones and gibes!"

As he stood sneering at them, he noticed the young boxer on the edge draw back his arm. There was the crack and whir of a stone from a sling. The crack of a whip and the whir of a pheasant's wing, and then it seemed to Saul as if he had been struck with a smith's hammer on the temple; and still wondering, his knees relaxed, and he slid into unconsciousness. . . .

He opened his eyes to find Barnabas and Timothy bathing his face, and the Roman police patrol standing anxiously about.

"Do you know who did it, sir?"

"Did what?"

"Tried to assassinate you!"

"Nobody," Saul said. "I had a touch of falling sickness."

The officer shrugged his shoulders, put his ivory tablet back in the bosom of his tunic.

"Very well, sir, if you feel that way, we can do nothing. But it's not fair to us. It may happen again, and this time the attack—of sickness, as you say—may be fatal."

The second attack was not long in coming. . . . Only the blue scarf around about his shaven head under the striped kerchief had saved his life. The cut on the face and the bruises on the shoulders were nothing. He lay down with throbbing head in Eunice's house until the cool of the evening and then ventured out on the balcony. He watched the town change from mauve to blue, and the swirl of the river's current among the stepping-stones. As he leaned over the balcony he heard a hiss past his left shoulder, and a rap behind him, as of one tap of a drum. And suddenly Barnabas pulled him back from the parapet.

"How?" Saul asked. "What is it?"

Barnabas was white and shaken. He pointed silently to where a knife was quivering, gently as a fish in a river, in the lintel of the door.

"God of Israel!" Saul said. "Do they go as far as that?"

Barnabas drew him inside the upper room, and fastened the door carefully.

"Now what?" he asked.

"I don't understand."

"I'll tell you, Saul. You have a choice of calling on the Romans for protection or—"

"That's impossible, Barnabas. We can't preach charity and forgiveness, with an armed escort."

"Of staying here and being killed. Only remember Saul, that if you die, the Church, you see, dies too. I would do my best, Saul, but I haven't your gifts. And also, Saul, remember this: if you are killed in Lystra, within twenty-four hours there will not be a Jewish throat uncut in Lystra. And you don't want that."

"What choice?"

"Of going off quietly to-night. Brother, the work here will not be lost. The people will always remember the two men sent from heaven to preach the new One God, and a life of clean hearts. And they will say we have gone back to heaven. And they will believe all the more."

"Then we return to Iconium."

"Not to Iconium, Saul. To go to Iconium or to Pisidian Antioch would be the same as going down into your grave. Not now. We go to Derbe. Lois has friends there. It is a small town, and you will be safe there. There is nothing an assassin fears as much as a small town. In great cities and in market-places he is safe."

"I should like to go to Iconium to see—well, to see my people there."

"You are not justified in risking your life to see any one, Saul," Barnabas said sternly. "We must go to Derbe."

They left for Derbe secretly between sunset and the rising of the moon.

§ 5

Suddenly, like a bolting horse, winter was on them. The poplars bent like bows before the wind, sharp as a knife. The farmers, with blue numbed hands, gathered their stooks of corn amid the snow. The lakes froze, becoming shining and hard as a spear. Some days rain would pour down as out of the mouth of a water-skin. And then again snow would come until all one could see was a white, whirling, woolly mass. The sheep huddled in the folds, and the camels moaned in the killing air. The mountains of Armenia seemed more threatening in white cloaks than in black nudity. Over the desolate landscape, white as the unutterable Pole, there was no sight, save an occasional wretched tree; no sound but the cry of the snipe.

There was no chance of making their way across the mountains to Tarsus now, so at Derbe they must stay. Gaius, a friend of Eunice's dead husband, was only too glad to take them in, and Barnabas was glad, for suddenly Saul became a sick man. The blow on the head, which had seemed fortunately nothing at the time, now gave him such pain that Saul would sit for hours, gray and stricken in the face, and then it would pass. But each day later, or a day or so after, it would return; and awaiting the return of the ghastly pain became in the end worse than the pain itself. Also the blow seemed to have

worked on his vitality, so that all the strain he had been under for years and all his sufferings seemed to break him up. He had fits of trembling, and when the door would open, or any sudden noise occur, he would start up. It was only with the greatest difficulty that Barnabas could get him, huddled up in sheepskin coats, to come out for a walk in the snow. If a train of camels or donkeys were passing, as they did, laden with charcoal, Saul seemed afraid to cross the narrow street, for fear he would be knocked down.

Barnabas knew that among the Jews of Derbe there was certain to be some physician, or some old woman skilled in simples, who, despite their differences about the Messias, would help set the Tarsan in good health once more. Saul, the chief of the army, and Saul, broken and in pain, were two different people. The first they would assuredly kill, but the second they would just as certainly succor. But when Barnabas suggested asking for help from the Jews, Saul would have none of it.

"It's but the slightest favor, Saul."

"I'll have none of their favors."

He was very hard to live with that winter. There was in Barnabas something that demanded joyousness, merriment. He would have been very glad to know other Jews in Derbe, discussing obscure theological points, talking a little pleasant treason against Rome. He could have been happy there, diplomatically avoiding the more difficult places, and perhaps making converts as John-Mark did in Cyprus, but Saul wouldn't have it. After all, Saul

was the one to please. But still Barnabas felt a little hurt. Saul was everything. He, Barnabas, might not have existed. Gaius, the big black-bearded sheep-king, did not understand one twentieth of what Saul was saying, but treated his words as though they were pronouncements from Sinai. The buxom serving-maids were always ready to drop what they were doing to perform him the slightest service. When Barnabas entered, they said, "Hush! Saul is thinking!" or, "Hush! Saul is dozing!" Saul had explained that it was his principle to work for a living, and there, in perhaps the richest house in Lycaonia, in the largest room, Saul wove tents of goat-hair, and there was as much interest taken in the crude labor as though brocades of Damascus were being prepared for a queen's wedding. Barnabas felt very uncouth, Jewish, ill at ease, very unnecessary.

He held no rancor. Why should he? he said to himself. After all Saul was a great man, how great even he, who had seen so much of him, could only suspect. But still, he thought, Saul might be a little more tactful. Everything Jewish was not provincial, and everything Greek wonderful, and the *pax Romana* the ultimate boundary of civilization. Curse the *pax Romana*! he grinned as he found himself saying it. We Jews had a civilization when the Romans were climbing trees to get away from the wolves. . . . He resented a little Saul's admiration of the Greek girl Thekla. Yes, she had brains and breeding and grace, but the hetærae of Alexandria and Athens and Rome gained more by their brains and grace than by the smoothness of their bodies.

The women of Greece had ruined Greece. They had dominated the men, until the men were nothing but chafferers in the market-place. They were merchants, gaining money so that their women-folk might be princesses. And thundering Homer had to give way to pale Sappho and subtle Erinna. In the end the Romans, who made love only when the fighting and the hunting and the traveling were done, took Greece as a weasel takes an egg. A man is made strong by belief in his women-folk's eyes, not by unbelief, or diffidence. . . . In fine, curse all Greek women, including, and first of all, Thekla.

A thing that hurt Barnabas really was Saul's admiration for the Greek boy Timothy, and his occasional slighting references to John-Mark. Given that John-Mark had been afraid to come into the uplands of Asia Minor, Saul might make allowances for a boy brought up in the city. A pale student is not an intrepid traveler, and who knows if Timothy might not be afraid in the streets of Antioch or Rome? John-Mark was a good boy.

He would feel all these things a little bitterly, feeling all the time that a barrier was growing up between himself and Saul, until he would see Saul with his face white and drawn with pain. Barnabas would stand in front of him feeling helpless.

"Brother Saul, God knows if I could take the pain and bear it for you, my heart would be joyful."

And then Saul would give one of those smiles of his that were like sunrise, and take his hand.

"Dear Barnabas!"

Then all would be right again.

The long difficult winter wore by until one morning the mountains of Armenia were black instead of white, and the marshes turned from plains of snow-covered ice into lakes rippling under the wind, and in the streets of Derbe a bird sang.

"What is that?" Saul started up from the couch where he lay prostrated in pain.

"That!" Barnabas listened. "That is spring!"

§ 6

They came to the gates of Iconium when the mauve twilight was turning green. The swallows were flitting about the walls, and the peasants driving home the patient buffaloes. To Barnabas it was the first step on the way back to Syria, and he was tired with the long walk from Lystra—there were no camels in Lystra up to his weight. He was glad to see Iconium, and gladder still that Saul seemed so much better. There was blood in his cheeks and a light in his eyes. . . . The sergeant of the gate-control was a Greek of Antioch. It was like coming home again. He apologized for examining them, but it seemed that some months before three score bandits, disguised as agriculturists, had entered the walled city and wrought havoc, and now the control was very strict.

"For that," Barnabas smiled, "we have nothing to conceal. I am Joseph of Cyprus, called Barnabas, a Jew by religion. As to trade, a theological teacher."

"And I am Saul of Tarsus, familiarly called

Paulus, also a teacher of theology. As to religion, a Jew—of sorts."

The official looked up, a shadow on his clean-cut Syrian face. "Oh!" And then: "I am sorry, but—"

"Are we not allowed into the city?" Barnabas asked in alarm. He feared for Saul in the chill moist nights of spring, and the peril of bandits was very real outside the city walls.

"Oh, you are allowed into the city, but the trouble is getting out."

"What is it, brother?" asked Saul.

"Well, Rabbi, there is a charge against you in Iconium of alienating a Greek girl, Thekla of Iconium, from her betrothed, one Thamyras. I'm afraid it's a bit of spite, or an attempt to keep you out of Iconium, but when the case was called you had left the town, so that we have orders to apprehend you to answer the charge."

"I wish we'd never seen this woman!" Barnabas exclaimed. But the next moment he could have cut his tongue out for speaking, for Saul's face had hardened into a mask of marble. He felt that Saul had removed himself a thousand miles from him.

"Let us go to the governor of the city now," Saul said. "I am a Roman citizen."

"Unfortunately," the sergeant of the gate said, "the governor will not be here until to-morrow. I am deeply grieved, Rabbi, but it looks as if we shall have to give you city hospitality to-night. It's the Roman Law. None is above it. Not even Cæsar."

"But, sir," Barnabas asked, "if one give a bond

for appearing? If a townsman of repute go guaranty? The rabbi has been a very sick man."

"Let it be," Saul said.

"But, Saul, Onesiphorus, the goldsmith, will be only too glad—"

"I said: Let it be. Let us have no more trouble about this than is necessary. It will only bring bitterness if it is made much of, and I want no bitterness. For the sake of the Church and for the girl's sake."

"I think the rabbi is right," said the sergeant. "And he will not be too uncomfortable, if he does not mind very much the chain to his wrist from the wall. And being a Roman citizen, he can make Thamyris smart for this. It will be only for a few hours, Joseph Barnabas."

"Go, Barnabas, and get some sleep. And now, sergeant, call the lictors. For I am tired, too, and shall sleep as well in prison as in an upper room. . . ."

Though it was late in the day, yet a crowd followed him as he went through the streets between the officers. Small children, riffraff of an Asian town; and young men with staves, and bracelets, the usual blustering effeminate blood of the edge of Greece, men of the same set, doubtless, as this Thamyris on whose complaint he was charged—they copied the masculinity of the Romans, but they had the eyes of brittle women, so little strength and so much hatred behind it. And with this crowd he saw darker faces, more masculine forms, and he knew the Jews of Iconium were behind the whole affair. Barnabas might underrate the enmity of the zealots, but

Saul knew. The learned elders of Israel saw, in the teaching of the Nazarene, the greatest menace to the Temple yet born; and where they could handle Peter, and perhaps Barnabas, too, if left alone, they did him the compliment of trying to wipe him out of existence. The rabble surged behind him.

"Kill the perverter of women! Kill the magician!" they shouted.

Saul, looking behind, noted two converts of Barnabas' from Pisidian Antioch. What they were doing in that crowd he did not know. He had never liked the men, but they were Nazarenes, however.

"Ho, Demas! Ho, Hermogenes!" he greeted them.

But they looked at him with truculent faces, and shook futile fists.

"Do you greet us, O false Jew! O perverter of women! O father of magic!"

Saul shrugged his shoulders. He had always had a suspicion that the men were spies. But Barnabas was not to be convinced. The crowd surged around him until the lictors were forced to draw their short, heavy swords. Strangely, the opposition, the peril, and the shouting seemed to awaken his sleeping, faint vitality. He felt better than he had felt for a year. . . . The iron-studded gates of the prison swung to behind him. The lictors gave their instructions to the jailer.

The cell they put him into was a wide room with a barred window. A few sleeping-rugs were laid in a corner, and a long length of supple steel chain, ending in a handcuff, was snapped on to his wrist. It

was long enough to permit him to move easily around his room, but he could not touch the door.

The sergeant of the jail was a fat, burly man with an immense, jelly-like belly and twinkling, creased eyes.

"Immortal gods!" he grumbled, "your lordship must be a prisoner of consequence. Do you know where we usually put rabbis? In a hole not bigger than a rabbit-hutch. Do you know who was here before you? Ah! there was a man!"

"Who?"

"Crocus, the robber-chief of the Black Mountains, the one it took Castellius two years to catch. He had a cloak woven out of women's yellow hair."

"And what happened to Crocus?"

"Hllew!" The jailer drew the edge of his hand across his throat from ear to ear, and hissed like a goose.

§ 7

He woke up suddenly. The jailer was putting a torch in the ring on the wall, and ushering in some one.

"This way, princess. Look, there is a step downward, princess. I shall leave you, princess."

When she came forward, she was as he had remembered her, a tree of silver in a dark wood. The moon shining without his window was not more silver than she. She dropped her white woolen mantle and looked at him.

"I knew you were here," she told him. "And it

seemed so foolish that I could not see you; that mere stone and iron and artificed wood should keep me away. So I came."

"Did you get an order from the archons?"

"No." She laughed a little. "My earrings of emerald and my silver mirror were my only authority."

"I hate to see men bought," Saul said shortly.

"I know," Thekla answered him. "It is a hateful thing, more hateful than the buying of a woman, for that can be disguised gracefully. But it cheapens the buyer, Saul, more than it cheapens the bought. So that it is I whom the transaction degrades. But I had to see you, dear master. I had to tell you how sorry I am for this stupid thing, and to ask you not to let it make any difference in your mind. Stupid things make more difference than tragic ones. Tragic ones clear the air, but the stupid ones thicken it with trivialities and little irritating shames."

She was speaking, he thought, she was speaking as no other woman spoke, thinking—thinking in her clear mind, clear as well-water, and translating thought into her silvery speech. She was absolute. So much above surroundings. She might have been in some wide room in her own house, or in the orchard among the apple-trees, as in this prison. She might have been hovering in the air.

"My only fear was that this might disorganize your life," he told her.

"My life was not organized until I saw you," she said. "Before you came life was pleasant, a shallow, beautiful life of shapes and colors. My flute stained vermilion, the golden sundown, my gold comb and

girdle, the soft hill fog among the beech-trees, the blue and silver moonlight, the shadow of a cloud upon a hill, and sounds, like the brave fising of the frogs and the movement of the wind among the plum-trees, the cricket's tiny bell, all these were life to me. The sight of the golden vetch amid the silver barley was more than the curly bronze-gold head of a man. I used always to listen, Saul, listen and see, but since you came I have seen more deeply, listened more intently. And past the flute-playing and the flowers, I caught something—" She paused. She seemed as if ashamed to go on.

"Go on, Thekla," he told her.

"Master, is it possible, when you are bothered and harried, and problems choke you like weeds, and all the world seems arrayed against you as with bucklers and with spears, and you are tempted, so difficult does everything seem, to say good-by to the friendly moon and whispering trees, to let life with the small dagger in your girdle flow from your wrist, is it possible then to stay quiet for a little while, and suddenly downward through the stars, comes thundering a Word?"

"Have you heard the Word?"

She nodded.

"Have you been tempted?"

"Yes, I have."

"Then you know," he said, "if ever you are like that again, you have but to listen, and the Word will come."

"I know that," she said.

"Then I have no more to teach you."

"But what is it, Saul? What does it mean? What does it say?"

"There was only one man who heard it so distinctly, who understood it so fully that he could translate it into our common speech, Thekla. And him they hanged."

"And there was only one man, of all who heard him, or who heard of him, who understood him, and that is you, Saul."

"That's not true, Thekla. They all knew, in their own way."

The dawn had come suddenly. Light crept into the prison room from the east, and made the guttering torch seem pale. A shaft of the rising sun caught the girl's silver face and turned it into a mask of fine gold.

"You are ill, Saul," she noticed suddenly. "There are heavy shadows about your eyes. And your hair has whitened."

"I have been close to death, Thekla. And perhaps I grow old."

"You will never be old, Saul. You will always be as you are, mature and fine. Your traveling-cloak may grow ragged and worn, but the you within it will be always you, until the change of death comes, and you will step out of it, splendidly naked, shining and free."

She was standing by the window now, and while his head was turned, she picked up the long steel chain which bound him, and kissed it with a swift, passionate kiss, but when he turned around and saw her she was cool, splendid as Athene.

"There are no men like you, Saul."

"Indeed there are, Thekla, and better. The difference is that I know the soul matters and the body not, and they think it is the body that counts, so that with age they grow weak, and I grow strong. Tell me of Thamyris, this man to whom you were betrothed."

"He is not a bad man, Saul," she said. "He's young and foolish, and headstrong and weak. A young buck of Asia with more money than character, who is taken with love for me. Saul, my mother arranged this. We are wealthy, and Thamyris is wealthy too, and it was a marriage of wealths to breed wealth, rather than of man and woman to breed children. I thought it would be all right, Saul, so easily do we accept convention. I had dreamed, as all Greek women dream, of Adonis, the god's golden brow and bare, golden breast. And I thought that even with Thamyris I could catch the god coming to me, like a sleek, black leopard, or white and furious, like jagged lightning. But then I heard you, dear master, and all I could see in it was squalor. . . . You see, Saul, if it were a little while, for this life, for the youth of this life, it would not matter. One could act as a bird takes existence, not knowing, not caring on what branch he will alight to-morrow, sure of sunshine and gold peaches and red hollyberries."

The town was waking to its day's work. Haugh! haugh! of buffalo-drivers. Rattle of springless Greek carts. The high, tuneless song of a boy in the street. The bark of awakened dogs.

"It was horrible," she said with a little laugh, "when I told Thamyras that I would not marry with him. I had not thought he wanted me so much. Perhaps he didn't. Perhaps it was just a whim that, balked, fevered his not strong brain. But, master, it was horrible. There were scenes that left me shivering. Thamyras is an exquisite, Saul, who loves philosophers' subtleties. He is also, like the men of his class, a patron of the arena, and loves to be surrounded by boxers and race-drivers, to be fiercely masculine with them. You know the sort he is. But, Saul, when I signified that I would not go on, all the veneer fell from him, and he was a naked, weak soul. He wept and pleaded, and then threatened. He called me the most terrible names, Saul, names that the caravan-drivers call their women, that the soldiers use to the poor ghosts at the city gate. And he accused me of vileness, of acting love with you in the apple-orchard, of being—oh, easy!—with every one. And then he would weep and clutch at my knees and cry. And go off and be like a madman in the wine-shops. And then come back. And my mother all the time pleading his cause, not speaking to me for weeks. It was horrible."

"But I cannot understand him."

"Of course you can't, dear master. You are not a weak man."

There was a loud coughing at the door, a rustling, and with many apologies the jailer entered. With him was a little boy, a dirty little boy with gaping eyes and mouth.

"The archons and lictors are coming, Rabbi, so

if the lady will go with the boy down the side entrance—”

“But why should I go down a side entrance?” Thekla looked at him out of her calm gray eyes.

“Well,” the jailer shuffled. “Well, you see—”

“But I don’t see. I am not doing anything wrong. Why should I not stay?”

The jailer gave a look of appeal to Saul.

“Go, Thekla!” Saul said.

A little happy smile of submission showed on her face, and wrapping her cloak about her, without a word, she followed the gaping child. A new admiration for Saul dawned in the jailer’s eyes.

§ 8

The proconsul was a tiny man, not much bigger than a small boy, but with two men’s energies and two men’s will-powers in his frail body. He dominated the court like a panther. He gazed about him with fierce eyes from under shaggy brows. He listened to the cause being pleaded with ill concealed impatience, shifting about on his circular seat.

“I have heard enough,” he said abruptly.

He bent his fierce dominating eyes on the perfumed, haggard-faced Greek.

“You, Thamyris,” he said, “are much to be blamed in wasting the time of this proconsular court on a frivolous matter. If the young woman does not wish to marry you, you can’t make her, and there’s an end to it. The prisoner does not wish to marry her, neither does she wish to marry; there’s an end

to that. I have her word and his word that there has been no misconduct between them. I accept their words. Young lady, go home to your mother. And you, madam, if you had shown more sense in bringing up your daughter, this would never have occurred. Less literature and more housework, less liberty and more discipline, that is the excellent rule of the matrons of Rome.

"A word more with you, Thamyris. You have had cast into prison, without the shred of an excuse, a Roman citizen. For this you yourself, an unfranchised colonial, could be put in prison and made to pay a heavy monetary fine. But mark the magnanimity of a Roman citizen. The learned rabbi wishes to take no steps in the matter. You are under a great obligation to him.

"Now, Saul, a word with you. Your creed is reasonable, your conduct excellent, your character without a reproach. And yet—I am going to expel you forthwith from Iconium. You may find it necessary to preach your prophet and cult. I find it more necessary to keep the *pax Romana* in the district which the Senate and people of Rome have intrusted to my care. Disputes, dissensions, contentions, the letting of blood, the breeding of hatred shall not obtain where I have arms to use and authority to use them. Do I exceed my authority? Very well, I grant you I exceed my authority. But, Saul, remember that if Roman citizenship has privileges, it has also duties. And it is your duty to assist me in keeping the *pax Romana*, even in the smallest sense, and in upholding the ideal of brotherhood which it is the

destiny of Rome to spread and enforce," he added.

"I shall, therefore, send you and your companion under escort on the road to Antioch in Pisidia. I have heard of doings at Lystra." His eyes roved toward the back of the court. "And the gods help any one who attempts the like in this proconsulate. From my seat I can see the three untenanted gibbets of Iconium, with the hungry kites huddled near-by. The gods have mercy on any one who attempts assassination, for I shall have none.

"The court is finished," he directed. "Sergeant, prepare an escort for the learned Saul. Clear away this rabble. Go, lictor, unbind his hands."

§ 9

Out of some Greek arrogance, Onesiphorus, the goldsmith, of Iconium, had built for himself and his a tomb in his native province of Pisidia. It nestled into the marble bosom of the Sultan Mountains, and about it were roses and thickets of myrtles, and a stream of water came laughingly from the summit past it. It had rooms as a house has rooms, and in the grove beside it was a statue of Terminus, the Roman god, as though the goldsmith had wished to show that even in his death was dignity. Here was the song of the nightingale and the song of the little river, the deep color of the rose and the deep color of the mountain's shadow. Death housed in beauty.

The bearded, bluff, rather shallow Iconian and his two grave sons had accompanied Saul and Barnabas and the Roman patrol out of the city, and when the

soldiers returned had gone forward with them, Onesiphorus chuckling as a servant led a heavily burdened packhorse. "We will stay a night at the inn," he laughed. "Ho! ho! At an inn!"

"If there is an inn on the road we will stay there for a few days," Saul said, "but I do not remember an inn."

"You can stay there forever," laughed Onesiphorus, and his two grave sons smiled apologetically. Father was good-hearted, but he did now and then act the fool. They hurried swiftly to Saul's side to save him from being bothered, leaving the goldsmith to tell Barnabas stories of Jews, Greeks, and Egyptians matching one another in chicane. "There was a certain man from Thessalonica going down the bazaars of Alexandria when he met a Jew from Jaffa—" To which Barnabas listened with a faint patient smile. He would rather have had the companionship of the two grave young men, but to them Saul was the hero. For them he was the intrepid navigator who had discovered the world after death, a world of terror and wonder. For them the resurrection was a vast new orb of splendid adventure, the gigantic country peopled by the Sons of God. And Saul to them was one who measured up to that titanic stature. In every shadow of his eyes, in every slow, graceful gesture they could read the heroic. To the goldsmith of Iconium resurrection was a state in which he could still hear the night-ingles, and have the scent of roses.

From the packhorse, he unloaded lamps and braziers and sent the serving-man to cut rushes for

the marble floor. He was a little disappointed that the Tarsan did not exclaim at the incongruity of using a tomb as an inn, but Barnabas explained to him that Saul considered death no more than a falling asleep, and so the tomb was no more than a sleeping-chamber, so that there was nothing to be astonished about at all. Which did not satisfy the Iconian quite, but salved his feelings a little for his missed joke. . . . The two boys and Saul set to work, Saul dictating letters to Lystra and Derbe and Iconium, and giving them his directions. Christianity, to use the word coined recently in Antioch, was a state of mind he wanted every one to understand. The Christ had lived, showing them how to live; the Christ had died, to show how little there was to be afraid of; the Christ had risen again. What could be more simple? The main thing was to grip that faith tightly. Perhaps they could preserve the faith better by gathering together in formal style, perhaps not. Perhaps circumcision might help those who felt they wished to belong to a tradition. Perhaps baptism would help those who wanted a symbol of a new life. But baptized or circumcised or neither, the Church they must have would be an upright and charitable brotherhood, believing firmly in the Man from Heaven and in the resurrection of the dead.

As to other matters; at Lystra, at Derbe, at Iconium, brethren wished to give offerings for the propagation of the truth. He did not dare refuse it, and yet he did not wish to take it. He wanted to keep free from the handling of it, and yet he wanted

to keep watch on how it was spent. He had had letters from Antioch at Iconium, and he was afraid that the old trouble had broken out again, Peter and Peter's party insisting that the truth should remain in the Jewish fold; and after a little while, not more than a week he thought, in Antioch's Pisidian name-sake, he would have to return to Syria. He did not wish them to say he was using the Gentile funds as a weapon. It was very difficult. But Onesiphorus crisply decided that he and his sons would attend to that matter. He laid out his plans for collecting, holding, and despatching funds so fully that Barnabas marveled how a man who told such silly stories of the chicane of Greeks and Jews should have so much ability.

On the evening of the third day the quick laboring steps of a mule could be heard on the road, and Onesiphorus told one of his boys to go call the traveler. A cup of wine, a crust of bread, a couch of aromatic herbs, should be his if he cared for it. Cleobulus, the elder of the two, went out in the silver moonshine.

"Would you care, sir, to come rest a while with us, to take a cup of wine—"

"Help me down, Cleobulus, I am so tired."

"Immortal gods!" he broke out; and then called quietly: "Brother Saul!"

She slid from her saddle into the lad's arms and rested there for an instant, quiet as a bird on a cliff. Then she pushed him away. "I thought I should never find you," she said. Saul came out to the terrace.

"Did you call me, Cleobulus?"

"I did, sir. It's—it's Thekla."

"Thekla, what are you doing here? Why aren't you at home?"

"Please, may I come in?" she asked quietly.

She came into the marble room where in the corner the brazier glowed, where on the marble table the big silver lamp with seven wicks gave out its friendly light. The evening meal was on the table, wheaten bread and small acrid wine, a dish of olives and a plate heaped with dried grapes. She stood in the doorway for an instant, a great weariness showing in her face. Onesiphorus clutched his big golden beard; the boy Sopolis went toward her quickly as if he feared she might fall. A frown like a cloud settled on the forehead of Barnabas.

"Come in, girl, come in," the goldsmith cried. "Take off her sandals, you boy, and get another cup and dish."

As she sat there all were conscious of a change in the atmosphere of the room. It was as though they were all about some great catapult or battering-ram, besieging a city, and some graceful, soft-plumaged bird had alighted on it, staying their hand. It was as though they were in a close armed circle, and some breath of spring or song of a thrush had come to them, and the circle had widened until it embraced the far-away hills. Onesiphorus plucked his tawny beard, and Saul watched her quietly. Sopolis, the younger boy, her childhood's friend, came and sat beside her, silent and understanding. Cleobulus was troubled. Barnabas was bitter and grim.

"I thought you were at home with your mother," he said.

"It was impossible there, Joseph Barnabas," she said quietly, "and I would rather not talk about it."

Barnabas shrugged his shoulders. Saul nodded understandingly.

"But what are you going to do, Thekla?" Saul asked.

She put away her plate and cup, and looked at him.

"I had thought, dear master, that you might have use for me. Please, please hear me." She put up a slim hand as he was about to speak. "I can write Greek and the Latin tongue, and I know Asia Minor so well, and there are troubles into which you, strangers, may fall, that I, a noblewoman of Iconium, can help you out of. There are a thousand things a woman may do, Saul, to help. I am versed in the ways of a house and in traveling, and I know what to do when folk fall ill. And I shall not be a charge on you, Saul. Onesiphorus can tell you that in my own property I am not quite a poor woman. And, master, I have friends everywhere, who think as I thought before you came, and I can lead folk to you in cities who will not know of the light until you come."

"Thekla," Barnabas asked, "why do you follow Saul?"

"I follow him, Barnabas, because he, having seen face to face the divine light of heaven, fills all the earth with infinite light."

"I don't like it." Barnabas was stubborn and inimical.

"But why?"

"People will talk."

"Surely," she said, "they who look once at Saul will know better than to saddle him with a valet's intrigue. And what does it matter what they say since it is not true. I heard in Iconium—I heard Saul say: Charity thinketh no evil. Barnabas, all folk are not evil-minded."

But Barnabas muttered in his hand.

"Thekla, my dear," Saul said quietly, "it is a terrible life. Travel and privation for a surety; stripes and prison always a possibility—"

"Saul," she said, "I know I am tired to-night, but that was not the travel from Iconium. That was nights of sleeplessness and worry. What do I care for privation? Am I some soft Oriental woman? A little philosophy, a crust of bread, some water from a spring, and freedom. Do you call that privation? I call it luxury. And stripes. Saul, a blow suffered in the cause of truth is a joy, and prisons do not dismay me, seeing that the body itself is but a prison, with limitations, sordidness, and torture. And I am so strong, Saul, so strong for travel and work," she pleaded. "At the first frosts, I swim still in Lake Karalis, when even the stoat is cold. And for years, Saul, I thought of myself as some young Diana of the mountains, hunting the wild boar, and chasing the hare with dogs. So that no walking bothers me. I can ride a horse as a man can. Indeed

there is so much of the man in me you would never notice the woman—”

With a quick exclamation of impatience Barnabas walked across to her. Her fair light gold hair was twisted in a cunning design about her head, and held in one master-twist by a great pin of fretted gold. He reached forward and plucked out the pin brusquely, and slowly her hair uncoiled and poured toward the floor. It poured like silver coins and golden coins out of a treasurer's sack. It poured like clear water made golden in the setting sun. It dropped to the floor and came about her like some cloak the Damascenes might weave in threads of gold. She tautened under the affront like a drawn bow. Sopolis frowned threateningly, and a shadow came into Saul's eyes. She stood up quietly.

“He is right, though,” she said. “It is true. I am not as much of a man as I thought.”

Her dignity abashed the vast Barnabas. He said nothing, but he was unquiet, uneasy, before her steady gaze. As she stood up the golden torrent all but touched the ground. She caught it, and with a twist turned it about her arm, as though it were a cloak. She put out a hand to Sopolis.

“Little friend, come with me,” she asked.

They were silent for a while after she had left the room. The goldsmith pondered in his wheaten beard. Saul's brow was furrowed in thought.

“Of course she is right,” Saul said. “There is no reason why women should not preach the truth as well as men, provided always they are of irre-

proachable demeanor, resolved against temptation, wise, firm in the faith——”

“She is wrong,” Barnabas said. “Brother, it is an ancient wisdom that keeps men and women apart. For desire is more devouring than a flame. It shatters cities more than earthquakes and conquers a people more swiftly than armies. It is stronger than death, Saul, for women risk death who are taken in adultery. Stronger than the certainty of heaven, for is it not written: The sons of Elohim saw the daughters of earth that they were fair? Set aside the Laws of Moses, Saul, for they are forgone. But do not set aside the custom of our fathers, for it is the true essence of our people’s wisdom since the waters prevailed upon the earth.”

“I am a new man, new-born, Brother Joseph, and the truth I preach is for new men, new-born. We have had enough of old men’s customs, of old men’s lies. I cannot see this.”

“No, Saul, you cannot, I know. You are like an eagle or great swan high in the air, hardly to be seen, and your eagle’s or great swan’s fearless eyes are set upon the sun, so that you do not see the pits and hurdles and shards of the road where frail men walk.”

“But the Lord allowed women to be of his following. Was there not Mary of Magdala, and Johanna, and Ruth, the wife of the tax-gatherer——”

“The Lord was the Lord,” said Barnabas fiercely.

She had come in quietly with Sopolis, the younger boy, and for a full minute they looked at her, wondering what strange change had come over her,

until they saw that she was in a boy's tunic and cloak of Sopolis'. But still there was something strange about her, and suddenly all of them noticed with a sense of shock that her head was as shorn as a boy's, clumsily shorn, and oiled until it was like a Greek boy's. In the light of the lamp it shone above and behind her clear white face. Her whole head was like some artificer's masterpiece, a mask of pale ivory with a head of gold. Her small ears were crimson with embarrassment. She walked forward into the light, and as she walked in her boy's dress she seemed like some pupil of a great wrestler or runner, lithe and free and graceful. She had the careless movement of a young tree in the wind. All her body seemed a young slim tree. And her face, grave and white, was the face of a student priest, so cold and beautiful.

"Sirs," she asked, "am I too much of a woman still?"

She turned to Barnabas and held her hands out, and the big Cypriote saw that her eyes were heavy with tears.

"See, Barnabas, I mean no evil."

"I know you mean no evil, Thekla," he said embarrassedly, "and surely you can come with us—if Saul wishes."

§ 10

The synagogue of Jews, which had been able by working on the proconsul to make Saul and Barnabas leave Pisidian Antioch fifteen months before, were

few in number now. They had scattered over the country at the first breath of spring, buying wool; bartering for skins of wolf and bear which the peasants had killed during the winter; lending money against liens on the crops, and doing a little quiet business in the slave-trade. Those who remained had heard the bitter words of Castellius at Iconium and were not inclined to trouble the pair any further. The proconsul at Antioch, moreover, had gone to the confines of Phrygia, and the powers were delegated to a Syrian Greek, Alexander, who was chief archon. And Alexander was no friend of the Jews.

It seemed like a piece of luck direct from heaven to Saul that he would have some time free for preaching, for on his first visit he had made a deep impression on the Greeks. He settled down for a couple of weeks. Thekla he sent to stay with a relative of hers, a Pisidian woman, by the name of Tryphæna, a huge masculine woman who had recently lost her daughter Falconilla, and was one of the old pre-Roman nobility of the province. Indeed, to the peasantry, who growled not a little against the Roman eagle, she was Queen Tryphæna. The rigid old lady could not quite understand her distant cousin's dress and new creed. She could not understand an Iconian noblewoman acting as secretary and interpreter and errand-boy to this imperious Tarsan Jew. But when she saw how strict he was in sending the girl home, she respected him. For Barnabas she had the contempt of her kind. He was of the present day, and she dwelt in dreams

and conventions in the days of Themistocles. But Saul was of the future, and future and past could understand each other, where past and present could not. She had no sympathy with Saul's ideal era of peace. Her mind was back of the spears of Marathon. But in his eyes she saw no fear, so they could speak heart to heart.

The chief archon was of that mixture of debauch and ability with which the Empire abounded. He was a fat, red-faced man who had gay, over-young manners, whose boast it was that he could enjoy the talk of the porter as well as that of the philosopher and interest them both. He was surrounded always by a rout of young folk of both sexes on whom he distributed his affection impartially. His residence, on the Phrygian side of the town, was a marvel of studied beauty, what with mosaics, little statues of Greece, formal gardens in the Damascene style, fountains. Always was it filled with young folk, of whom one was his especial favorite—it might be some young gladiator on a provincial tour, or some young dancing-girl of Corinth, or some young effeminate poet of Phrygia. There was something in his red face, small nose and twinkling eyes, that suggested an elder brother of Bacchus.

Yet for all that he was a man of noted ability in the Empire. It was he who had built the great road from Attalia to Lystra. No detail of organization, no problem of building, was beyond him. And though he might live in a luxury that vied with that of Capreæ, yet when occasion demanded he could live a life as frugal as the meanest laborer's on the

road. He was liked in Antioch much more than the cold proconsul. Everywhere he went there was laughter. He would stop and exchange indecent pleasantries with the old flower-sellers at the public fountains, speaking the *koine dialektos* with the Phrygian burr. When he was chief magistrate, the city was well governed, for he interfered little with the liberties of the townsmen, and they on their side did not abuse their latitude.

At the news of Saul's preaching he was not perturbed. So long as the man did not speak against Cæsar! Indeed, he would do himself the pleasure of going and hearing him speak, he promised, and one afternoon he did arrive with a band of young men and girls. But Saul's matter did not interest him, though the bugle-like manner of his speech did. Who wanted to rise again anyway? Only the fools who didn't have a good life on earth, and if they didn't have a good life on earth it was their own fault. Barnabas frankly bored him, and he was wondering how he could get away without hurting the speakers' feelings and doing their cause wrong when his eye lighted on the boy.

"Who is that tall, well favored lad?" he asked.

"Some follower of the preacher's, chief archon."

"Bring him hither."

She started as a slave bowed to her, and listened, and then in her quiet, dignified, gentlewoman's way came forward. Alexander had assumed a waggish expression. And as she stood before him he began to sing:

"Τὸν τὸ καλὸν μελανεῖντα Θεόκριτον—

"If Theocritus, the brown and beautiful, hate me, hate him, Zeus, in fourfold measure. If he love me, love him. Yea, by Ganymede," he warbled throatily, "heavenly Zeus, thou too wert once in love. Οὐκέτι μακρὰ λέγω. I say nothing more," he winked.

"I do not understand you, chief archon," Thekla said. The others laughed.

"Will you come with us to-night, young Christian?" Alexander asked. "Come to my villa. We are all young and beautiful."

"I cannot."

"Then to-morrow night?"

"Thank you, chief archon. I cannot." And she went away.

"He spurns me!" Alexander laughed.

But for days she was troubled, not herself. And one morning Barnabas found her in tears.

"What is it, Thekla?" He was beginning to have great fondness for the girl. She was so sincere, so true.

"Oh, Barnabas, I have no luck. I bring misfortune everywhere. I may as well tell you, I suppose. I tore the chief archon's coat and struck him in the face."

"But why, Thekla?"

"He's been following me, and trying to be friendly. I've been getting these all the time," and she gave him a poem.

"Κρίνατ', Ἐρωτες," he read, "ὁ παῖς τίνος ἄξιος. εἰ μὲν ἀληθῶς
ἀθανάτων, ἐχέτω. Ζανὶ γάρ οὐ μάχομαι.—"

"Judge, O loves, of whom the lad is worthy. If truly of the god, let him love him, for I do not battle with Zeus.—I don't understand. Do you, Saul?"

"Go to Tryphæna's, Thekla," Saul directed her, "and resume your girl's clothes, and rightful name and rank. No, don't be sorry. You couldn't help it."

Though she said nothing more, yet the chief archon did not cease to be a nuisance. He still pursued.

"O boy-girl! O girl-boy! Which is it? What does it matter?" In state he called on Queen Tryphæna, giving her the Phrygian title. "Homage from the new state to the old," he told the fierce old lady, and spoke feelingly of old Greek culture, of old Greek ways. Thekla did not enlighten her as to the reason of the archon's visit. Every morning there was a fresh poem for her, brought by a young Syrian boy. "Κάλλος ἔχεις Κύπριδος.—Thou hast the beauty of Cypris, the mouth of Peitho, the form and fragrance of the spring Hours, the voice of Calliope, the wisdom and virtue of Themis, the skill of Athene. With thee, my darling, the Graces are four."

"Chief archon," she asked in order to stop him, "do you ask my hand in honorable marriage?"

"But you do not believe in honorable marriage. Oh, wicked one, wicked one, who ran away with the Jew man from Iconium?"

§ 11

From Lystra, from Iconium, from Amorium, from Philomelium, from Sagalassus, from all parts

of the provinces of Pisidia, Lycaonia, and Phrygia, the country people had come to see the games. Tier upon tier the circus was filled. A sea-fighter from southern Italy was to descend in the warmed tank and fight an octopus, and a great Nubian had brought lions and tigers, great tawny lions and sleek spotted tigers with whom he would play as a girl with kittens. There was also the famous 'counting bear. A young Iberian gladiator from Gades was to exhibit his art, armed only with a small sword, against mountain bulls. Also there were to be contests in wrestling, boxing, and the sword. The big events were part of the provincial tour of the great Imperial troupes, but the smaller events were looked forward to just as eagerly, for the victors of these often got their chance to fight in the Colosseum at Rome. Often they fought here in the provinces with more fire, making their fame, than they did in the capital of the world when their reputation was assured.

The proconsul's box was empty, for the great official had taken a chill in the mountains and was sick of a fever in the uplands of Phrygia, but the chief archon's box was full to overflowing. It was a notable day for all, for Alexander had persuaded the proud old lady Tryphæna to come to the games. She sat there rigid and proud, while the peasants from the mountain districts murmured her name, and the townspeople cheered the chief archon with his merry smile, his red face, his fillet of woven gold on his brows, his immense fan of peacock's feathers. A most likable old rake, they agreed, and they told

one another stories of him. Oh, absolutely unbelievable! But still there was so much humor in the old dog that you couldn't be angry with him. Beside him sat the mystery-girl from Iconium, who had followed the preacher of Christos in boy's clothes. Beside Alexander she was like Athene beside Bacchus, so cold, so silver. . . .

The clamor of the circus had died after a great wrestler from Bithynia, a huge mountain of a man, shaking with jelly-like flesh, but tremendously fast for all his bulk, had thrown a Greek of Corinth, with legs and arms knotted like trees. The Bithynian was about to kill the man of Corinth when Alexander gave the signal to stop. There was one thing to be argued against the chief archon. He was too soft-hearted. . . . And now there was a silence. From the gathered peasantry and from the caves of the wild beasts there came an overpowering ammoniacal smell, so that the men and women in the chief archon's box were glad of the fragrant herbs they had brought with them, their nard and cassia and amomum. And from without the circus there came a man's voice floating across the wide arena, distinct above the bellowing of the bulls, and the deep-throated roar of the lions. Saul and Barnabas had taken their stand near the circus doors and had gathered many, stopping them who were going into the arena. The voice of Saul was not loud, but it was resonant. The marble of the tiers gave it back in an echo.

"And they who say there is no resurrection of the flesh, shall have no resurrection.

"For they believe not that the dead had thus risen.

"For they know not, O Pisidians, the seed of wheat or some other grain that is cast barely into the ground, and which having been dissolved rises up again after the will of God in the same body and clothed.

"And he dissolves not only the body which is sown, but blesses it manifold.

"And if one will not take the parable of the seed grain,

"Let him look at Jonah, the son of Amittai, who, because unwilling to preach to the Ninevites, is swallowed up by the sea-bred monster.

"And after three days and three nights God heard the prayer of Jonah out of the deepest hell, and nothing is injured in him, neither the hair nor the eyelid.

"How much more will he raise you up who have believed in Christ Jesus, as he himself was raised up!

"And when, by the bones of the prophet Elisha, one of the children of Israel that had been thrown upon them, rose from death in his body, how much more shall ye rise up on that day with a whole body, after ye have been thrown upon the body and bones and Spirit of Christ!"

Alexander shut his fan, and turned to Thekla.

"There goes old Leather Lungs," he smiled.

He had been, all morning, murmuring throaty passages of Greek poetry to her, uttering shrewd observations about statecraft, of how this race-course and that circus were of greater value to the

Roman commonwealth than Pompey's legions, so much more attraction had the common vulgar amusement for people than the high ideal. And it was not only the sweating street folk who had their weaknesses, but the great. Did not Philip of Macedon, great Alexander's father, hearing at the same moment of the birth of Alexander and of the success of his horse in the races at Athens, take more pride in the horse than in the son who was to be king of the world? And Socrates, wisest of men, his heart turned to water when the wind blew aside the chlamys and showed the egg-white limbs of Charmides. So that old Leather Face— And he winked.

"Chief archon," she said, "if I tell you again—"

"Small silver face," he smiled, "you could not tell me. Is old Leather Jaws a man of salt, or of stone? Ha!"—he shook a waggish forefinger—"who went to the jail in the night-time and bribed the sergeant of the lock with her earrings?"

It seemed to her as she sat there in a sort of dumb misery that she was fated to bring disrepute on Saul. First she had put him under a cloud of scandal in Iconium and later had been the cause of his imprisonment and exile. She loved him. She knew that. She would always love him. Quietly and secretly she had sat in Iconium before he came, cool as a vestal, but when she knew him and when he spoke her heart took wings. She would have given herself to him, but he was not a man to be stopped for a moment on his road by anything, least of all a woman. And she loved him for that. And to think now he was

cheapened by the chief archon and his rout, to whom no name, no mission was sacred, so much did they know of the under side of life. The thought was intolerable, an injustice not to be borne. . . . The circus went on. A group of African pygmies, brought from far beyond Candace, gave an exhibition of acrobatics. They rolled like balls, and jumped over each other with grotesque agility, just like human beings, and a woman of southern Gaul, a great Amazon of a girl, exuding vitality, put a quartet of wolves through the mazes of a dance, handling them as one would handle a dog. Their eyes were baleful and red, and their snarls terrible to hear, and one noticed that the girl held her long rawhide whip in her left hand, while in her right was a knife, large and heavy as a butcher's.

The big event of the day was coming now. The loosing of the lions. The black Nubian whose care it was to provide the wild beasts for the circus came and kissed the perfumed jeweled hand of the chief archon, while a herald announced that any competitor, clad in mail and armed with spear and knife, might go in and do battle with them. A man who killed two or more lions would receive a chaplet of gold leaves and a gold-hilted sword, and one who killed one a chaplet of silver leaves and a silver-hilted sword. Also there were premiums for staying a certain length of time uninjured in the arena. The chief archon listened in an indifferent way, for sports of blood did not interest him overmuch. He was keener on pitting his racing-stable of Gaulish trotters and swift Arab horses

against the quick ponies of the hill chieftains. He gave a signal with his hand, and in the wall of the arena a door was opened, and one by one, like great blinded cats, the lions came into the open, under the blue Asian sky, under the blazing Asian sun. At first they seemed quite small, but as one looked, a little chill came into the heart, such strength one sensed in them. They moved noiselessly, their great bronze muscles showing under their glossy skins. They had butter-colored manes, like the hair of some magnificent peasant woman, and they had golden eyes. There was something of the woman in them. They had the graceful walk of graceful women. They had the ruthlessness, the cruelty of women. They were splendid as splendid women. And then one opened his mouth, and uttered a roar that was like slow shuddering thunder.

"I should like to see old Leather Whiskers preach his Christos to them," said Alexander.

"They would listen," Thekla told him.

"As you listened, gray troubled eyes," he laughed, "with your sweet mouth offered, like a wild bees' honeycomb to the hawk in the air."

"Chief archon," she said, "am I no longer by common repute a maid?"

"Pouf! What is common repute to a woman of nobility? Head of gold, what in a peasant woman, whose integrity is her fortune, is a glaring fault, becomes in a woman of breeding a pleasant eccentricity. What? Do you hold so much to maidenhood?"

"There is something precious in it, chief archon,

something more precious than the gold the miners give their healths and lives to obtain. The foul black magician knows its power, for it is only by looking into the quicksilver held in a virgin's hand that he can see the future. Listen, chief archon, we of the uplands of Asia believe that the wild boar and the wild bear will recognize its fragrance, and do the virgin no injury, but reverence—"

"Thekla, you speak like Sappho, like a Sappho who is the enemy of love, but you shall never persuade me that old Leather Belly—"

"Shall I not, chief archon?" Her voice came clear and sweet as the trill on a flute. "Chief archon, shall I not?"

She unloosed her sash of white linen swiftly, and undoing the clasps of her apple-green gown, let it fall to her feet. She stepped out of it, and with a quick boyish movement her little shirt of Chinese silk came over her head, and she kicked off her sandals like a bather. And now, but for her maiden's girdle of brocade and gold, of rose-colored brocade of Damascus and fine golden thread, marked with the secret sign of Isis, she was naked as, splendid as, the sun.

"O Artemis, my mother!" she prayed swiftly.

Then she vaulted into the arena.

She came down on the coarse golden sand in a shaft of silver, softly as a spent arrow dropping. And looking about her for a moment, she went quietly toward the spot where the five great cats were growling in the sun. Three were on their haunches, and one stood still lashing himself into a

frenzy, while one lounged backward and forward, with the measured rhythm of a swinging arc. Her throat became parchingly dry suddenly, and on the soles of her feet the sand was like a multitude of needles.

The whole of the assembly watched her, the common people thinking it was some egregious whim of the Grecian lady's, splendidly shameless, mad and free. They were stricken dumb. They shivered with vicarious fear. In the chief archon's box, a mad tumult arose. Tryphæna became rigid and white, and with a long sigh fell forward senseless. The captain of the circus signaled to an attendant. In the chief archon's seat Alexander sat, with all his ruddy face become gray and yellow, except that about his eyes was a strange white circle. His lips were violet. His face was the face of a man stricken suddenly dead, and on his head the chaplet of rose-leaves made it more terrible, for he seemed like a man slaughtered by the jest of some very cruel god. But he was not dead. The violet lips wobbled silently. He was praying.

"O Zeus, common father of all who are born, to you Alexander, the chief archon and chief criminal of Antioch, dedicates a new temple, and to you, Apollo, the beast-tamer, his two great horses, Hemer the Arab, and the great gray of Corinth, Kallistion, if but Thekla returns in safety."

A slave brought a great bow and a sheaf of arrows to the captain of the circus. Very quietly the big Nubian took off his upper vest of white wool, and

stood there naked to the waist. His great black torso was like the upper part of a statue in black marble, as of some hero, wrestler or captain, or old Carthage. His cropped curly head with the great ear-rings of gold; there were great gold bands on his upper arms, thick as a man's thigh. Quietly, methodically, he tested the string of the bow, chose five arrows. There was a swift movement behind, and Scæus, the boxer from Massilia, came flying down the tiers. At his wrist dangled a huge knife. As he went past, the Nubian put out a hand, swift and large as a bear's paw, and caught him by the waist-band. The boxer looked around. His ears were like crumpled flowers, and his nose was cruelly broken. On his hands were still the wadding and tapes for the cestus.

"Softly, softly, white boy." And Scæus fell back.

The Nubian rubbed his hands on the ground, and straightening up, chose and put an arrow in the bow. Widened his stance and stood waiting. He was like some tremendous spring, coiled up.

The small figure with the long slim legs and cropped golden head went on unfalteringly to where the tawny beasts were, and with every step she went, each man in the vast circus went with her. And in each man's eyes there dwelt the fear of death. Each man could feel the hot leonine breath, see the satin eyes, the tawny manes. The lithe white figure with the rose-colored girdle went up to them, went through them. The great cats blinked at her as if she were some spirit out of their native wilds. They

moved their lazy heads after her. She passed the pacing lion within an arm's length. He stopped in his stride to let her by.

And now she turned, and her back was to them, her flat silver back. And as she walked terror was in the back of every man's neck. And very solemnly, very slowly, the five great beasts arose and followed her. They seemed mildly curious. But once, when she stumbled in the coarse sand, they moved a little faster toward her. And each man's heart stood still.

The big Nubian unshipped his arrow from the bow, and still watching out of his muddy brown eyes, barked low, swift commands. She came toward the archon's box, and as she approached, it seemed that her knees were faltering, and her face was shining with sweat. Her lips were colorless, and as she looked at the wall in front of her they could all see a terror in her face. Behind her the lions still ambled in their diffident cat-like stride.

"So long as she doesn't run—" said the Nubian. He looked around. A score of men had swarmed into the chief archon's box bearing staves at the ends of which oil-soaked tow burned. They looked at the captain of the circus.

He snapped his fingers suddenly. The snapping of his fingers was like a great whip cracking. And like soldiers dropping into a moat the attendants sprang into the arena with their flaming brands. They ran forward toward the lions, and dropped, each on one knee, like spearmen about to receive a charge. The lions snarled at them, roared at them,

settled back on their haunches. The Nubian slapped the boxer on the back.

"Now, white boy!"

The boxer sprang into the air like a missile driven from a catapult. He landed on his feet, like a ball bounding in front of her, and with a swift movement picked her up as a woman might pick up a child, and throwing her over his shoulder ran back and began clawing up the wall like a cat. So simply was it done that all were silent, still, fearing for her. He put her down before the chief archon. She reached for her frock, but her knees were trembling and her hands, so that Scæus himself took it up and wrapped her in it.

Some trick of the wind brought the voice of the speaker without the gate toward the chief archon's box. He was evidently finishing his discourse.

"I am therefore assured that I sow the most strong seed in a fertile soil, not anything material, which is subject to corruption, but the durable word of God, which shall increase and bring forth fruit to eternity—"

Below them the lions roared and snarled in fury. The mob began to whisper, began to speak. Thekla looked at the death-like face of Alexander.

"Well, chief archon?" she asked.

The mob found its voice, and suddenly a vast brazen shouting split the sky, deafening the ears, drowning the preacher's earnest voice, and sending the great majestic lions scuttling about the ring like small frightened dogs.

§ 12

A snarling yellow wind blew over the land, raising great billows of dust, like rollers breaking on a sandy beach; and from where she stood, outside the city gate, Thekla could see Saul and Barnabas and the messenger from Antioch in Syria go down the long road to the sea. The messenger was riding a small white donkey, and Barnabas was walking with his great athletic stride, but Saul was mounted on a camel, high, aloof, lonely, his face covered by his head-dress against the vicious dusty wind.

She had thought, saying good-by to him this morning, that he would give her the kiss of peace, and indeed, blushing, she had thought of asking for it, for after all, it was the Christian custom, but with his piercing eyes on her, she did not dare. He had held her hands, and assured her of his love—in Christ, she thought a little bitterly—and even when speaking to her, she could see he was thinking of something else. Well, he was Saul.

"He will not look back," she said.

A swirling column of dust hid them for an instant, and when it passed she noticed, with a little panic, that they were near a bend of the road. How fast they traveled! Or was it only her fancy? And as she watched, they turned, paused a moment—Saul like some sheikh out of the Syrian waste—disappeared.

"He never looked back," she said.

She cried a little, and laughed at herself, and then cried a little more. She shook her head as if angry

with herself, shaking the tears contemptuously from her eyes.

"He is not the sort to look back," she said.

Though they were gone, and the road was barren and empty, and the eddying yellow columns were ugly as death, and though she knew he would never turn back, yet she waited. The blown grit stung her cheeks, and she wanted to go and cry on old Tryphæna's bosom, yet she waited. She waited on.

CHAPTER XIII

§ I

ALL about him, now, Athens hummed like a beehive. In the loft where he was working, weaving the yellow sails for the island coasters, the chatter of voices drowned the clack of the shuttle. The bare-armed girls, quick, clever as spiders, chattered incessantly of love-affairs, of soldiers, of this new poet, of that fashion of wearing the hair. The men, short-necked, short-armed, with the small hairy hands of monkeys, while working, talked of this vague thing and that vague thing, disdaining personalities. The weaver decided questions of statecraft which bothered the senators of Rome. The carpenter, the sweetmeat seller, spoke as familiarly of Æschylus as of the balladmonger of the public square. When two or more of them gathered together, they spoke loudly, none paying any attention to any other, but gesticulating, screaming, making a parade of wisdom and scholarship of which they possessed no shred, but hoping some bystander, some foreigner, perhaps, would be impressed, and return to his barbarous country, wheresoever it was, with a proper awe of the men of Athens. On two things every one was agreed: that all Romans were barbarians and thieves, and that nothing was worth

anything, except the getting and breeding of money. A merchant would speak to a customer of the reasoning of Plato while at the same moment cheating him out of some forgotten copper.

For Saul this city had a vast pathos, an immense attraction. It was like some lady who had been superb, noble, and proud, and now in old age had fallen on evil days, keeping something of the grandeur of her youth, retaining possessions which could not be alienated as by law, but grown mean, and cheap, and in manner a little *cocotte*. There dwelt grandeur still. The gold-tipped crest of the great Minerva of Phidias gleamed still from the Parthenon, a mark to sailors thirty miles at sea. Still the great Long Walls ran down to Piræus, so broad on top each of them that a chariot could be galloped with ease. Here was the red hill of Mars, with the sunshine on soft Hymettus: the great pillars of the Parthenon, the Virgin's House; here the lovely temple of the Unwinged Victory, sweet as a bar of music; here the Erectheium, the small hostel of Minerva's mystic olive-tree. The nightingales sang still in the twinkling olive-branches by the Cephissus, as they did when Sophocles lived. Here was the Stoa Pæcile, the Painted Cloister, where Zeno taught. Here was the site of the little garden of Epicurus.

The small crooked streets had each a charm in them. Everywhere was the shrill green sycamore and the somber cypress, and everywhere were statues, of white marble, of agate and porphyry, of dull bronze, of brass and gold. Here the Jewish

High Priest Hyrcanus, in full robes, stood in lifeless stone beside the rough navigator Conon, and stern Solon was by Berenice, the wanton princess of the Jews, and here was thundering Demosthenes. Here was the altar of the Twelve Gods. High above the city rose the statues of Theseus and the Day. Everywhere were altars: to Modesty, to Pity, to Fame, to Oratory, to Energy. In the Street of the Mercuries, before every door, was a square marble pillar with the carving of a flying boy, and with devices written in the beautiful Greek script, as: "Presented by Agathias. Walk forward, and think no evil"; or, "Presented by Androclus. Betray no friend." In the Street of the Tripods were little three-legged tables or bowls of bronze or porphyry won by athletes in the public games.

Everywhere were gaiety and riches. Men passed on horseback, followed by black slaves. Women were carried by in gaudy litters. Even the dogs were joyous. The striped bees and blue butterflies flew to Hymettus. Women in white and purple robes, in red or blue robes, with a deeper, different color at neck and hem, passed by. They had silken girdles and small red shoes, and their elaborate hair was held in place by pins of gold. The peasants walked by in short tunics of red or brown with bare legs and bare arms, and everywhere were girls offering flowers, lilies and violets, roses and sprays of ivy. Here were little quiet places where a man could think, like the sweet stream Callirrhoe, or under the shade of the plantain-trees near the Temple of the Winds, where the small bronze man with the switch in his

hand turned to every breeze, and the sun marked the time on the dial of Andronicus. Eastward was the great race-course where, on holidays, a tumult as of Babel rose—ten thousand screaming onlookers, the thundering of hoofs, the whir of the flying wheels, and the hoarse shouting of the charioteers. Or there was the theater, where languid ladies with pearls in their hair, and languid men with gold rings on their hands, listened to boys recite Greek poetry.

He felt, for the first time in his life, at a loss. Here was the very spirit of scholarship. Here had Aristotle been; and there on the hill of the Pnyx, Demosthenes, Pericles, Solon had addressed the people. And here his own townsman, great Zeno, had founded his Stoic school. His own scholarship was Hebrew, intense, national; and but for some of the modern Greek writers, like Aratus of Cilicia, the astronomical poet, whose "*Phænomena*" was so popular, or Cleanthes the Stoic, of the deeper learning of the Platonists he knew little. And as he listened to them in the Stoa, he felt clumsy. Their philosophic openings were as formal as gambits in the Persian game. His own oratory was direct, precise, striking as with a hammer. Only speaking to Jews would he be formal, drawing Kabbalistic similitudes, quoting from prophet after prophet, after the subtle Sanhedrist manner. But here that would not be understood. Here they loved to dwell on each graceful phrase, savoring it like a sip of wine, and so long as he got his meaning home he cared nothing for grace. But he feared them a little. He feared their sophisticated smiles. He could hear

them laugh at his Tarsan turns of phrase, his Syrian idiom. He who feared neither death, nor prison, nor any hardship, felt a fear before the cutting word, the little laugh. None could be so cruel as the learned.

And though he knew their shallowness, and felt that all this talk of ideals and abstract ideas was but a game, yet he felt that somewhere in the Athenian heart was a chord he might touch that would turn their petty fiffing into deep booming music. Any one can talk, but the people who raised altars to Modesty and Pity, perhaps their shallow flippancy was but an armor for their deep feeling, an armor worn so constantly and gaily that it became part of the body. There was no god of new or remote days who had not his altar. And lest one should be forgotten they had raised a fane to the Unknown God, whom the common people thought to be the god of earthquakes. But to Saul it was more. It was the despairing gesture of a man who had come to an unscalable precipice after a long search. The Unknown God! There was a promise in the name.

But the promise in the name of the Unknown God, like the promise of spring about the bleak lips of winter, was discounted, set at naught even, by the symbol which met him at every street-corner, on every pillar, the Grecian *herm*. And though the philosophers of the Agora might explain it in a hundred subtle ways: that it was a reminder to the Athenians against shame, the morbid virtue, the mother of dark thoughts and sordid deeds; that it was a reminder that life was short, and that

man had but one body, and the conclusion was obvious; that this: that that—yet to Saul the symbol of the *herm* was terrible. It was a mark of tragic cynicism. By this act, which you have in common with ape and dog, are you renewed upon the earth. The grass grows, the goat crops it, the peasant boy is nurtured at the nipple of the goat, and when he is grown man strong, by the gesture of the goat he renews himself, and a new child sucks the goat's harsh teat, and the old child dies and rots, and his bones and marrow nurture the grass that feeds the goat that suckles the child, that will couple and die in its turn to feed the grass to nourish the goat. So their conclusion. And Saul felt like crying as some Arab arguer by the village well might: And ho! my uncles, which was first then, the child, the grass, or the goat? But they would only answer: What does it matter, since this is the end?

Though they listened to him in the sail-loft, and at the Weavers' Gild, and in the small wine-shop where he drank sparingly the small harsh country wine with his fellow-workmen, they listened cynically, treating it all as a curious mental problem, this resurrection he preached. Old Anastasis, they called him affectionately. But he felt if he could get up in the Painted Stoa, and strike with words like javelins, as he had done in so many cities, he might set them alive under the frozen academic gloss. But he was so alone, so friendless, he felt. The last eighteen months had been very hard, and Barnabas and he were estranged, and Peter more bitter than ever, and Timothy the beloved, and Silas, that faithful,

bristling fox-terrier of a man, were in Berea. He had none to help or encourage him. Never even in the Arabian Desert had he felt so alone, as in the babbling, shining, dying city. . . .

§ 2

He had returned, from his journey with Barnabas, to find Antioch a battle-ground of Christian and Jew, and it was told to him that in Jerusalem it was much worse. Finding that the Galilean Church was not to be put down by force, the men of Jerusalem resorted to intrigue, and joining with it, had sought to insist on the yoke of the Mosaic Law. They contended that Christianity was within Judaism, and before any Gentile could be admitted he must undergo circumcision and conform to Sabbatarian conduct. It was the old contention against which Saul had fought so bitterly before he left. In Phœnicia, in Macedonia, in Syria, there were so many Gentile believers that if necessary a new Church could be founded, and Saul knew that Peter and the other apostles at Jerusalem were aware of this, and would not go too far in risking the issue of a fight. He felt, too, that it was a matter of Temple politics; the Pharisees in their hereditary hatred of the Sadducee sect, finding any stick a good one with which to beat a dead dog, had embraced Christianity in the main. Their subtle minds, inured to the intricacies of the Law, would find a way of resolving the difficulties of the Messiahship of Jesus. Once they could get the

Gentile converts into their fold, they would be so strong that the Sadducees could not stand against them. The dissension at Antioch was but an echo of the fight at Jerusalem. Saul wrote to Peter urging a meeting of the apostles and elders to have the matter threshed out.

As he went with Barnabas to Jerusalem he had the same feeling of oppression he always experienced when approaching the City of David. He fell silent and troubled, and was not a little hurt when he saw at the meeting of the Apostles how much he was still distrusted, how much feared. Peter, he found, had changed a good deal. He was portly, important, sure of himself, and while brotherly with Barnabas, was all but cold to Saul; but the greetings of the sons of Zebedee, James and John, made up for anything Peter's welcome lacked. James was tall, and slow-spoken, a man in whose every tone, in whose every gesture, sincerity dwelt. One felt that here was wisdom, here was truth. The famous John, the very beloved of the Lord, was of great interest to Saul—a man who, at fifty, was sweet as a child of five. He seemed made half of dreams and half of fire, and Saul's heart went out to his dear brooding face. When James spoke and John pressed his hands, Saul felt that the sons of Zebedee were friends to him, understood him.

Saul saw, offhand, that there was to be difficulty here. Barnabas told Peter of the trust imposed in Saul at Antioch, and how everywhere he had gone he made friends and believers. The blinding of the

Cypriote magician, and the healing of the cripple of Lystra, impressed the Galilean fishermen. But when Peter rose to speak, Saul could scarcely repress a smile.

"Men and brethren," he said, "ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe." "By my mouth!" mark you. Everything he and his friends said was a belittlement of Saul's work, and every time Saul's name was mentioned, by his pilgrim's pseudonym of Paul, it was secondary to that of Barnabas. What did it matter anyway so long as the work was done?

He noticed, however, that when Peter was reminding him, as he did continually, that the church at Jerusalem was poor, and the Gentiles rich, it was to himself and not Barnabas that he pleaded. . . . John's understanding look made a great deal for peace in the assembly.

Saul feared something. What it was he did not know. But Peter was ever with Barnabas holding his hand, and Barnabas' Cypriote relations were by him always. And it seemed to Saul as if they were blaming Barnabas for not asserting himself, for letting the Tarsan get the better of him. John-Mark's mother was there, with her proud Cypriote beauty, and John-Mark's self. And poor Barnabas was red and ill at ease. He could occasionally hear his friend's voice: "I beg of you—" "But I assure you it is not true—" "Pray do not misunderstand—" And Saul smiled bitterly to himself. Ah! there, he

feared, went a friend. Relatives, relatives! Thank God he was quit of his.

Though everything seemed to be going well on the surface as to policy, forgetting for the instant his personal grievances, his keen colonial's brain noticed two things he did not like. In the first place Peter, and those about Peter, even to some extent James and John, seemed satisfied with what missionary work had been done. They saw no world beyond Asia. That Greece existed, Africa, Italy, Gaul, the savage Britons—to Peter and Peter's they were nothing, whereas to himself, to the utmost outpost of the Eagles he felt the message should go. The *pax Romana* was but fertilizing the soil of the world for the *pax Christi*. How blind, how provincial they were in Jerusalem! However, after a bitter struggle, that could be arranged. As to that, he would do what he liked. If he felt called to Greece he would go to Greece. If he felt called to furthest Thule he would go to furthest Thule. The truth of Christ was more than the vision of Peter. He could always find men to help and follow him. . . . The second matter was more dangerous, though. Here and there he had caught phrases; subtle intonations that meant something other than words said; challenges: "What do you mean by that?" references, that might have been only flowery speech, but might mean more to certain persons; as Pillars of the Temple, Boaz and Jachin; Kabbalistic metaphors, which he was too versed a Hebrew student to accept as metaphysical abstractions. He felt that in the midst of the Church was an organization

based on the lines of the Pythagoreans, but their object was not knowledge, their object was power. And knowing his people, he was as sure as of his own heart beating that the ancient treason against Rome was afoot. The smiling tolerance of Rome would never think of a Church professing peace as a hotbed of revolution, so under the guise of a Christian Church a circle of revolutionists might meet, plot, proselytize. His heart sank. Roman law was tolerant. In no empire had been such a freedom of thought and speech and deed. But one crime Rome did not forgive, was ruthless in punishing. And that was treason against the Senate and people of Rome. No man, not Cæsar's self, could plot against Rome and live.

What could he do about it? Rise up and denounce it? They would only laugh at him, saying Saul was mad. Saul sought to divide the Church. Saul had drunk new wine. No, he could only keep quiet and warn all the churches against false brethren; tell such men as were to be trusted what he imagined was going on. But who was to be trusted? Any Jew? Peter's self? Barnabas even? He sat still on his carpet and plucked his grizzled beard.

John saw how bothered the fiery Tarsan was, and sought to comfort him, as a child might, by drawing him out; by listening with a child's ears to the stories of Saul's travels, of Damascus the beautiful and Babylon the vicious and old, and of the high lands of Asia, of Derbe, buttressed by snow and ice, and the frowning bulk of Kara Dagħ, the black mountain, that sometimes seems a day's ride on horseback

from Derbe, aloof and cool, and other times seems no more than a bow-shot from the city, frowning and terrible. Of the blue Ægean, where the little vessels go under the sign of Castor and Pollux, and sometimes the lights of Castor and Pollux show on the masthead in balls of flame, while the mariners offer sacrifices to Poseidon, king of the sea. Of the writhing octopus, and of the schools of hake and red mullet through which the ships drive. And John confessed that he would wish to live on one of the Greek islands, one of the pearl-like Cyclades, or some other small island, Patmos or Ios.

"But what would you do there, John?"

"Live like an Essene, Saul, on bread and herbs and a little goat's milk and the smell of the sea. And write and think."

And he told Saul that three of them in Jerusalem were concerned each in writing a life of the Lord, of what they had seen and understood. Matthew and John-Mark and himself. Of course John-Mark had not seen anything, but everybody told him what they knew, and he was such a beautiful Greek scholar, almost a poet in fact, that they were looking for great things from his work. Damn John-Mark! Saul said to himself bitterly. And Matthew was a man of education. He had been a publican, as Saul perhaps knew, but his hobby had been genealogy, and none could trace the descent of the Lord as Matthew could. As for himself, he found great difficulty in writing. There was something he wanted to do. He could hardly explain— But perhaps he was bothering Saul.

Saul took a quick look at the kindly earnest eyes and worn face and beautiful white hair of the younger son of Zebedee. He put out his hand, and laid it over John's.

"Tell me," he said.

Well, John explained, as to what had happened, it seemed to him that genealogies didn't matter, nor did anything the prophets said. Something had shaken the world, and what was necessary was to get it down simply, cutting out all small human things there could be any discussion about. Did Saul understand? Indeed he had tried to explain the beginning and the history of the world up to Christ's nativity in a sentence. He had sat on the roof-top of a house in Jerusalem, looking at the blue mountains of Moab, watching the stars come out and waiting for wisdom. He had written it down, but Peter and John-Mark and Matthew did not like it.

"Won't you tell me, John?"

"But you may laugh at me, Saul, as Matthew and John-Mark do."

"Tell me," Saul insisted.

"In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

"The same came for a witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe.

"He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man which cometh into the world.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name:

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

"And the Logos was made flesh," said John, with terrible simplicity. "And the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us. . . ."

§ 3

It seemed to Saul, now he was back in Antioch, that he was entering on a period of his life in which there was to be nothing but disappointment and failure. The elders at Jerusalem had sent letters to Antioch by one Judas, a creature of Peter's, and Silas, a little bristling man, communicating their decision in the matter of the admission of Gentiles. Silas had friends at Antioch, Gentiles, and was allied to half the Roman aristocracy of Syria, but Judas was a slaving, wheedling man, beneath his fawning exterior fanatically Jewish. And Saul saw some-

thing sinister in this messenger. . . . Since he had come back to Antioch, and especially when he was in Jerusalem, he had been anything but a healthy man. His old trouble of the falling sickness had left him, but a newer terror came to him now. One day in Antioch he was looking at the proconsul's house, and he saw it as through a thick mist. He had imagined for a minute some strange phenomenon, forerunner of an earthquake perhaps, but a little later he knew it was his eyes. And this was followed by a headache that left him limp as an empty sack. He said nothing of it to any one, but it was constantly recurring, and at Jerusalem he noticed that the sharp disputing brought it on until it might occur twice a day, with such agony as to make him moan. His face would be white with great drops of sweat on it, and he would be shaking, like one in the palsy. He would have told Barnabas, and asked his advice, but the old comrade was so far from him now. And a great fear came on him that soon he might be blind. He could no longer preach or travel, or work even. He would be forced to return to Tarsus and live on the family fortune, which he hated.

All the physical suffering, all the mental agony, had made him morbid, so that he saw everything a little awry. He suspected in the sending of Judas a quick, left-hand move. The letter from the elders in John-Mark's beautiful script: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from

blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, you shall do well." That seemed plain enough, but a wink from Judas, a word to the Jews to abide their time . . . When Judas had met every one in Antioch, he returned quickly to Jerusalem. The slightly stupid, good-hearted Silas remained on.

He felt he had been superseded by the emissaries from Jerusalem, and hurt not a little by the slights he had received there, and what with that and the worries of his own health, on the return to Antioch, Saul kept himself to himself, silently, going to the meeting as little as possible, and there saying nothing. Indeed, it seemed to him, for all the fair words from Jerusalem, that the Judaizers were usurping most of the time and most of the discussion in the Church. The Gentiles looked to him for speech, for encouragement, but it was as if he had no more heart for the fight. What was the use of fighting? They would give in and come back again when he was weary. Quietly he went to his daily work and came from it, bothering no man. The fear of blindness and the waning of Barnabas' friendship made his heart so low.

A word of one of the younger men in the Church touched him deeply. He was walking one morning through the market-place toward the weaver's loft where he was employed as foreman, when one of the young Greek converts touched his arm.

"Brother Saul, what bothers you? The brethren have asked me to inquire."

His eyes were so bad that morning that he could

hardly see the lad's face, and answered gruffly, that there was nothing.

"Brother Saul, won't you trust in us? Do you not know that there is not one of us who would not let his heart be torn out of his bosom for you? Give our eyes, our hands for you?"

Saul felt so much at the words that he did not trust himself to speak. He answered angrily, denouncing them as fools.

"You are fools all. See, I am as strong, as firm as the proprætor's house," and he pointed to it.

"But the proprætor's house is not there, Saul. It is there," and he pointed in a different direction.

"Fools," Saul said. "Fools all," and he stumbled away.

He was surprised when he was told that Peter was coming to Antioch on a visit. It seemed everybody knew it before him, and he was angry. "Why was I not told?"

"But you haven't been here, Saul," some of Peter's friends told him. "If you had been here you would have known." There was a veiled rebuke in the words, that Saul was no longer a zealous attendant at the meetings of the Christians. "If they could force me out," he said bitterly to himself, "they would do it."

The visit of Peter was unnecessary, he knew. The church at Antioch was doing very well. And Peter's place was in Jerusalem. It seemed to Saul's inflamed imagination that the elder apostle was there to try and undermine his influence. He had

probably heard, Saul thought, that himself was sick, a weak man. "They are like jackals crowding around a dying lion," he told himself savagely. And little as he liked the new and important Peter at Jerusalem, he liked the visitor to Antioch less. Peter had assumed a proconsular attitude. He was visiting his churches. His gestures were wide and ample, and with him he had his boasting, vulgar wife. Saul had striven so hard to give the church at Antioch a signet of dignity, so that even the foppish Greeks and sturdy Romans respected it. Now here was Peter, with his curly head of a provincial dandy, his Jewish side-locks, and his wife, who should still have been gutting fish in Capernaum, overdressed, with her horrible Galilean accent, referring to this great Roman lady, that Greek noblewoman, converts, as her friends. It was horrible.

Saul noted with surprise that he had underrated greatly Peter's brain. Peter, whoever had primed him for it, was now frankly a Judaizer, but his method was good. He spoke of the new religion, and what a great support to it the elder one could be. A religion, after all, needed a tradition and a dogma. They were the Boaz and Jachin of the edifice. Two religions, so closely knit, what a pity it would be if they were sundered! One might say an elder and a younger brother. He would remind them, too, that the Lord belonged to the older creed. Had himself undergone the ceremony of circumcision. The subtle attack on the republic of Christ brought Saul to a cold fury. He rose from his

back seat in the meeting. Peter paled a little. Saul stretched forth an accusing hand. There was such a silence that even thought stopped.

"If thou, Cephas"—his tones were ice—"though by birth a Jew, yet hast eternal life on the same terms as the Gentiles, and not by virtue of thy being a Jew, why dost thou attempt to coerce the Gentiles into Judaism?" He paused. "For by the works of the Law," he thundered, "shall no flesh be justified."

The murmur of applause and relief in the meeting showed Saul how much they had counted on him, how much they needed him. But his anger and strength were a weariness to him. Why should he have always to fight with men of his own Church? Though there was relief on each honest Gentile face, and the voice of Peter was stilled, yet Saul felt a hatred against him surge among the men of Jerusalem. Though the rebuke to the Eldest Brother of the Faith was merited, was necessary even, yet what a pity it was that it had to come and come in public! Why was Peter so weak? So easily swayed? He would never be forgiven for this. Peter would forgive him, he knew. The old Galilean's big heart, he felt, had a place for him in it. Peter in his queer way loved him. But the Temple! The accursed Temple! What hold had the edifice of David's planning over these men of Palestine that even the effulgent death of Christ could not set them free?

He left the meeting sick at heart and went off by himself on one of his favorite walks, by the grove of Daphne. The cool green of the laurel and myrtle trees helped his eyes, and always there was some

one with whom he could talk. All Antioch knew him, and all Antioch respected him. The proconsul would stop to salute the foreman weaver where he would pass by the rich Syrian merchant with disdain. To the townsfolk he was the type of those old philosophers around whom Greek literature was built. He had his peculiarities, of course, as his belief in the Jewish Christos. But he was straight as a rule, forceful as a setting-maul. And in the grove of Daphne the young priests, not yet lost in formalism, exchanged their learning for his intuition, and went away wondering why they were uplifted. The young priests granted, talking on the resurrection, that the idea of virtue and energy being irretrievably lost with death was intolerable. That this outrageous injustice should prevail was a shadow on the very face of Justice, and without Justice the world could not exist. Plato had believed in the immortality of the soul, they pointed out. He had expounded his idea of the soul of man after the dissolution of the body in the form of a vision seen by Er, the Armenian. But that, the young priests added with their modern criticism, was not pure mental science. It was a fragment probably remembered from the work of some forgotten Syrian poet. But Plato gives no idea of the physiological conditions of the soul's existence. Without consciousness how can a disembodied spirit exist? How is identity secured, dear sir? they asked Saul.

He argued, quoting the Aristotle they revered, that everything is a vital principle, the $\Psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ of the philosopher. The vital principle shows various

developments, from growth to appetite and will. Man, the highest form of life, had the lower forms in him; he grows as a plant grows; he feels as an animal feels. More than that, he has thought. Now what is the instrument of thought, as the body is the instrument of energy? The whole organization of man is the natural body. But the natural body must hold within it the germ of a higher organization, the part transcending experience, with which we think, have ideals, are perceptive of, to use the Platonists' word, the Logos. The spiritual body can be felt within the natural body, Saul argued. When one felt with conviction that he was immortal, what he felt was a quickening of the spiritual body in the natural body, as the babe quickens in the body of the mother. The vague stirrings one feels, the driving toward beauty, toward God, are but the growing of the spiritual body. But if one hadn't felt it, the young priests objected. Well, either of two things, said Saul: it was not awakened yet, or the spiritual body had died within the natural body, as sometimes the child dies in its mother's womb. It was all very difficult to see, unless one knew the Christos. The Christos had lived, died, and was publicly buried, and later was seen by first Cephas, secondly James, thirdly, his twelve friends and followers, fourthly, over five hundred people in Galilee, and lastly by himself.

"But if it has all been a delusion, Rabbi?"

"If it has all been a delusion, brother, then my preaching is vain, and I am a false witness of God, for I testified that God raised up Christ. If the

dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. But this is beyond question, brother, for not only I, but others, have talked to one who died. His body was shining and glorious. It could appear and disappear at will. But they touched him, brother. He had a body."

"But, Rabbi, why is the Messiah now? Why not ages before, when the world was young?"

"The world is very old, little brother, but man is young. The very earth we tread, Kabbalists say, is the tomb of a thousand worlds. It is the vast sepulcher of innumerable graceful and horrible things, which were only fertilizing the ground for the gardener man. I think it is only in the present day that man disbelieves in God and the coming world. The old nations had belief. Your Plato, our Abraham, knew of the mansions of God. Not before now was the Messiah needed."

It was a relief to get away from the petty squabbles and cheap politics of the Church and discuss truths with men. With honest Romans and suave Greeks he felt at home in argument, and sitting in the grove of Daphne a great yearning came on him to be on the long road over the horizon's rim. Himself and Barnabas, he thought, going into strange cities talking to troubled, puzzled men. Once Barnabas and he were on board ship again, all differences would be forgotten, and the subtle poison of Church politics would sweat out of the big Cypriote on the open road, and they would be as they once were, closer than brothers. He went to Barnabas' lodging in the Street of the Wool-dyers.

He had expected, so great was the enthusiasm in his own heart, to find Barnabas as keen as himself, glad to escape from the maze of the crooked town, and establish the old comradeship. But the former Levite was ill at ease. Saul urged him to come on the old Iconian trail and see how all their friends fared. "Just we two alone, Joseph."

"I will go willingly," Barnabas said, but there was no eagerness in his tone. "But we must take John-Mark with us."

"What! John-Mark! Barnabas, are you mad? Have you forgotten how he deserted us on the road to Pamphylia?"

"He is young," Barnabas said, "and not as tough as we two old soldiers, Saul. He will grow out of that."

"I will have no spy of Peter's with me."

"You are forgetting, Saul," Barnabas flushed, "that he is a nephew of mine, my little sister's son. And I love him. But then bonds of family do not count with you, do they?"

Saul felt a quick surge of anger. He knew Barnabas was referring to his sister in Jerusalem, with whom he was not friends, so definitely were she and her husband of the Pharisee cult. What right had Barnabas to refer to matters of which he knew nothing? It was on the point of his tongue to mention that the Lord's self found no help, but rather a hindrance, in the people of his house. They were the last to believe in him. But he felt it undignified to argue.

"Fo! Barnabas," he said. "I see you are a slight man."

The Levite spread out his large palms and shrugged his shoulders.

"Then you will not come with me into the mountains?" Saul still lingered, finding it impossible to grasp that the old friendship was gone.

"Without John-Mark, no!" The Levite was definite.

Saul said no more, but left the house. Outside, the April night was beautiful. The full glory of the May moon was in the air. Everything had the disturbing quality of spring, the promise of life, the lure of great enterprises. The lutes and flutes of the Syrians vied with the nightingales. And the singing river spoke of other rivers in other lands, rivers to cross by fords or little bridges, rivers to sail upon between banks of rhododendron and willow. And where the caravans rested the tinkle of the camel-bells came like the soft whisper of a distant land. But Saul saw nothing, heard nothing. His heart was hollow and empty, like a house one of whose loved occupants has left it for the gray regions of the dead.

§ 4

He often thought, in these glorious mocking days, of leaving it all. The picture of John, sitting quietly, thinking and writing, and, like an artificer, hammering the tangible world into ringing chords of

wisdom—"In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God"—haunted him, and he imagined himself dwelling somewhere, away from it all, and with some young devoted scribe, setting down what wisdom had been vouchsafed him. In that way, he argued with himself, the feelings of anger and the disputings which his visits caused would be done away with, and his message remain. This Church, which he with his own hands had helped so much to build, never would let him forget that he had been its arch-persecutor. And every allusion made to his early days in Jerusalem brought back the scourgings and the killings and the burnings so much that it was agony. Of his own apostleship he had no doubt, but the other twelve looked at him askance, except for John, and James a little. He was like one of a family born out of due time, a child of a flaring, dying passion, appearing when all his brethren were full-grown, and they resented him. . . . Barnabas and John-Mark set sail for Cyprus, and Saul knew he would never see old Joseph again, and a little more of his heart died. Barnabas, who had helped him in the flight from Damascus, who had nursed him in Derbe, who had come to seek him in Tarsus. And Barnabas had sworn always to be his friend. Of course he understood that Barnabas was hurt over the public attack on Peter, but what could he do? Even knowing he had done right was little consolation for the loss of a friend. People he called friends he had many, admirers, followers, but they were not Barnabas.

He had not noticed at the time how much the

men of Antioch disapproved of the attitude of Barnabas. There had been no warm leave-taking. Barnabas and John-Mark had slipped off quietly, like thieves almost. And suddenly the brethren came to him, asking him, urging him to go to the regions of Cilicia and Phrygia. Letters were coming, talking of new converts, who demanded Saul. Why would he not go? And low-lying Antioch in summer was not beautiful. And one would go with him. He decided suddenly to throw aside his lethargy and go, and looking around for a helper, elected Silas, the messenger from Jerusalem. The man's dog-like devotion, his utter sincerity, touched Saul. And there was about his eyes and shoulders the look of a fighter.

They left Antioch on the overland trail to Derbe, and Saul flung himself into the work of preaching and organizing with a fury of energy he did not feel. He found everywhere he went that the congregations sought more his own trenchant modern exposition of the truth of Christ than those of the Jerusalem-instructed men. The Gentiles wanted no Lord's Supper, no love-feast, no baptism. All these things savored too much of the initiations and mysteries of the pagan gods whom they were ready to leave—they were compromises of the new with the old Oriental faiths. Saul's cogent, uncomplex message was like a cool sea-breeze. When they came to Derbe they found the great-bearded Gaius, the sheep-king of the mountains, there to greet them. His red face, his vast healthy laughter, made Saul's heart rise. And when Gaius asked of news of Barnabas, Saul told him all. And later he was sorry for

it, for he could see that Gaius thought very little of Barnabas for deserting a friend. What! Immortal gods! was not a man's friend more than his sister? More, naturally, than his sister's son. But there was more in this than family love, swore old Gaius, some damned intrigue. The Temple of the Jews, winked the sheep-king, had him in thrall. Once a Levite, always a Levite. As to the cause in Derbe, well, every man in his employ was a Christian, by Bacchus! He was a Christian, wasn't he? and Gaius slapped himself on his thundering barrel of a chest; well, he would employ none but Christians, by Demeter! It was extraordinary the success Christianity enjoyed in Derbe, Gaius beamed. Saul said nothing.

Half a day's journey from Lystra a young man was waiting on the road. He had broad shoulders and a freckled face, and gray eyes, and he ran forward and kissed Saul's hand.

"Thou art Timothy, little Timothy. How thou art grown, little Timothy!"

"Yes, it is I, dear master."

"And thy mother, Eunice, and thy grandmother, Lois, are they well?"

"They are well, dear master."

"Timothy, here is Silas, who is come with me to help. Barnabas, Timothy—Barnabas has left me."

The young man patted the apostle's bridle-hand, and spoke to Silas. He was coming into young manhood now, but there was about him the look of the boy whom Saul had known five years before. Though he spoke deferentially and welcomingly to Silas, his eyes were always on Saul. He seemed always ready,

alert, to help the elder man, unsaddling his horse in the shade, and flinging down saddle-bags for him to rest on, as a young son might do for a loved father.

At Lystra it was like coming home, with Eunice and Lois to welcome him. The old grandmother had a noted skill in herbs, and, though Saul laughingly disclaimed being ill, yet she would insist on his washing his eyes with spring-water in which had been bruised small aromatic shrubs of the hills. And Eunice, with her swift rhythmic fingers, was weaving new head-dresses for him, woolen and linen, with a flap like a vizor for the eyes. Her beautiful white teeth went *t-k-k* as she bit the threads.

"Timothy wishes to go with you, Saul," she said quietly.

"Whither?"

"Whithersoever you go."

He did not quite understand until she told him, that Timothy, since his first visit, had felt an urge to help Saul in his work. "He is a queer boy, and a good boy," she said, "half dreamer and half traveler. He is so honest in his heart. When he was got, dear Saul, my heart was so singing with love and beauty that I knew no ordinary child would be born. And I have never been disappointed in my grave, brave lad."

"But he is your only boy, Eunice, and the prop of his grandmother. And the way is hard, prison of a surety now and then, perhaps death."

"My dear—" she put down her sewing—"because I loved his father so much, the slim, curly-headed,

shining-faced, shining-hearted Greek, I know that death is no more. Saul, he is nearer to me, being dead, than ever he was in life. When I dream in the sun-dappled garden, he is there to understand. And when night comes, with darkness and the chirrup of the cicada and the song of the nightingale and the small frog's small shrill cry, he is there. The country to which we go is like the town over the hill, the town which we have never seen but know is there, with its laughter by the fountain, its ripe, adjoining corn-fields, the unsullied beauty of its nights, and there the air is better and there are straighter streets, and there are no cruel old women there who look for evil in all things, nor foul old men who hurt a woman as a weasel hurts a hare. And there every one has dignity, and is too proud to cheat. To mother, too, Saul, falling asleep, to use your own beautiful word, is like putting off one's winter shawl in singing May weather.

"So you see, Saul, sending Timothy with you is only doing what one should do. It is like 'this.'" She thought for a moment. "The folk of the world are like a people who dwell in a desert country, where there is little shade or water, where the sun blinds the eyes by day and the cold of night chills the blood. And where the heart falters, and the sordid immediate joy of drink or women is understandable. And if they only knew that behind the seemingly impossible steel mountains are happy towns and green fertile country, where there is room for all, their hearts would be so high that they would conquer the mountains. And the conquering of the

mountains would make them so strong as to be worthy of the bird-haunted land. Should we not tell them? Help them? Cheer them up the snowy passes? Is not that a work for a woman's son?

"And as to the cause, with whom could he be better than with yourself, dear Saul, who have seen and spoken with a great golden sheikh of the leafy country? He will help you, Saul. He will take care of you. For you do not take care of yourself. Timothy will see that you do not grow hard as a great rock, Saul. He will make you more human. He will make you understand how loved you are. You didn't know that, Saul, did you? that you are loved? You thought you were only feared, and hated, and respected. My dear, wherever you go, the old men dream of the gallant visions of their youth, though they say nothing, having lost the fiery speech of their early days; and the young men would all wish to follow you, and the hearts of the women go out to you as you buffet your way against the whirlwinds of the world. . . . So it is settled," she said. He strove to speak, but she rose and looked at the hour-glass. "And now you must eat, Saul. Yes, I know, but you must again, Saul. Red wine and the small thyme-flavored mountain lamb. For you shall not leave the house of Lois and Eunice at Lystra until you are once more a serene, healthy man."

Of all the young men in the world, there was none he would choose rather than Timothy. His heart was so much toward the boy that out of fairness he must warn him of the dangers ahead. But the boy looked at him with grave, unafraid eyes. "I know,

sir. I have thought over all, and am not unprepared. I do not seek death, but if it comes, with God's help, I shall not want in courage. As to prisons and scourging, knowing I am right, what do they matter. And they shall not make me bitter, sir, I promise you that."

Silas Sylvanus thought well of taking him, but the messenger of the council suggested a difficulty. Though the boy's mother was a Jewess, his father was a Greek, and he had never been circumcised. If he were only a son of the Law—"I do not suggest it for reasons of religion, sir," the Roman of Jerusalem was quick to explain, "but just as a matter of policy. If we have an uncircumcised Greek boy with us, the Jews, of whatsoever town we visit, will accept your teaching as a definitely Greek doctrine." Saul saw the wisdom of this.

The difficulty was adjusted by the visit to Saul of Isidorus, the chief of the wool-buyers in Lycaonia, a great florid hulk of a man, a notable among the Jews. He came in with his bustling business man's manner.

"Well, Doctor, I suppose you are not too good friends with us?" His manner was conciliatory and bland.

"How should I be, seeing what evil you did me here before? Have you an assassin outside the house?"

"Now, Doctor, now, Doctor!" Isidorus was apologetic and smiling. "Mark me, I say we were wrong. I say we were worse than wrong. I take all the blame. But, Doctor, you know, better than

any, how feeling gets the better of all of us. You didn't know us. We didn't know you. In Antioch, on your first visit, you preached to our people. We listened to you. Because we wanted to discuss it, to know a little more, you were impatient. You were hot-headed. You turned from your own people and preached to the Greeks. Well, Doctor, you know how the Greeks like us, like a fox likes a trap. You don't know perhaps how hot-headed these mountainy Greeks are. You tell them we killed Jesus of Nazareth, they take it as an excuse to kill us. The best thing for us is for you not to be there. It is the question of one man out of the way against the possible slaughter of us all, you understand. There are not many of us Roman citizens like yourself. We have no claim on Cæsar. Tell Cæsar that all the Jews in Lycaonia and Phrygia have been murdered. What will Cæsar say? 'Oh, is that so?' Doctor, you were wrong, but we were more wrong. Is that enough? Do I have to say more?"

"Why do you come to see me, Isidorus?" Saul was cold.

"Because, Doctor, you did a fine thing. When you were hurt, near to death, outside the city walls here, you said nothing. A word would have brought the Roman garrison on us, the Greeks armed with sticks and stones, and our men would have been massacred and our women a prey to the body-mad Greeks. You knew it, Doctor, and you said nothing, and that was fine of you. You had us at your mercy and you let us go. Doctor, I love my people, as you cannot understand. You are a Jew of Tarsus, quarter Arab, quar-

ter Greek. But I am an old Jew, a Jew of Babylon, and I love my people. I love my faith. God of Israel! how dear they are to me! You do not understand, Doctor. You are not of the seed of those whom Nebuchadnezzar, the mad-bull king, brought to Babylon." All the sleek modernism of Isidorus had dropped from him, had dropped from his face like a mask, and in his eyes Saul saw tragedy centuries old, and before his mind Saul could see the starving, ragged, beaten hordes, driven and goaded like cattle, and he heard their despairing cry: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." . . . "Any one who does good to my people, be he Roman or Greek, I could kiss his feet. Any one who wreaks evil," and he closed his hands significantly. "Doctor, I do not believe in your Messiah. There are Jews who do. Very well, let them. But I am an old Jew. I make no compromises. But, Saul, if we cannot be friends, let us not be enemies."

"Very well, then, let us not be enemies."

"There is a time coming," said Isidorus, "when no Jew should be the enemy of any other Jew. There is a time coming—" he looked at Saul keenly—"that has been promised to us."

"Tell me no more, Isidorus," he said. He felt the hot breath of treason in the air. "I am not one of you."

"You are not against us?"

"I think it unwise of you. Isidorus, I know the faults of Rome, but I love the freedom of Rome, and the breadth of Roman law."

"You do not put Cæsar above Jesus?"

"Jesus was divine."

"But the Romans say: 'Divine Cæsar.' "

"Cæsar is a little accident for the time. Jesus is absolute, forever."

"That is enough," said Isidorus. "Saul, in Phrygia, in Lycaonia, in Antioch-Cæsarea, among our people you may not find friends, but you will no longer find enemies. Is there anything more I can do for you, to make amends?"

"Yes," Saul said. And he paused. Isidorus misread his hesitation.

"Is it money? God of Israel! As if that were not the easiest thing in the world—"

"Money? What should I want with money?"

"Yes," Isidorus said. "Yes. I had forgotten. You are a Roman citizen," he said a little bitterly, "and you do not have to buy justice, or be prepared against the cruelties of little officials. And you are not of Jerusalem or Babylon. Your mothers did not communicate to the children in their wombs that in the house on the morrow there might not be even a few zuzim to buy a crust of bread with, or a skinful of water or the smallest boniest fish—until gold became a mania with you, an obsession in your blood. But forgive me, Saul. I am bitter."

"I understand, Isidorus," the Tarsan said gently. "There are few things I do not understand."

"I think you do, Saul. Now, how can I help?"

"I have a young boy with me, a secretary and helper. His mother was a Jewess, his father a Greek. I make no secret of it. I wish him circumcised, not

for reasons of religion, but for reasons of policy. I could do it myself, but it would help me if it had the open sanction of the congregation. Will you help?"

"Is that all, Doctor? Surely we will sanction it. You do not see eye to eye with us now, but I know that when you and your boy come to the end of your journey, the Shema will be on your lips. 'Hear, O Israel' . . ."

Though all was going so well for Saul, the work progressing in a manner that was a wonder even to him, so much did he expect; though he had regained in some measure his former health, and executed a treaty of peace with his old enemies; though he had with him the two workers he would like best to have, yet his heart was sore. He would have wished Barnabas to have seen how everything prospered, and he felt that without him Barnabas would do nothing. He would become obscure, and John-Mark gain all the credit. Also he knew, too, that the old comrade was suffering, and Saul suffered more for his suffering than for himself. At Iconium there was another matter that made his heart ache. Onesiphorus and his two sons were there, and a multitude who wished to hear him. But when he asked for Thekla, about whom he felt a pang of guilt, so little had she been in his thoughts, there was an uncomfortable silence, and only by degrees did he get the story from the Iconians. Thamyras, her affianced husband, was dead. Had, in fact, encompassed his death by indulgence in wine and all manner of debauch, and had died cursing Saul, and Thekla had withdrawn into Syrian Seleucia. . . . He under-

stood now, with a feeling of embarrassed shame, that the girl had loved him, him and not his religion. And the discovery stunned him. It had been on his account she had cut off her hair, had walked through the wild beasts at Antioch. And all he had given her was a few theological phrases. Barnabas had known it. Why hadn't old Joseph spoken?

"What could I have done, Onesiphorus?"

"Nothing, Saul, nothing. It's not your fault. It's just one of those tragedies that wring the heart, because it does not end. If you had been a less great man, Saul, you might have been weak. And it would have been a little intrigue, a thing that passes like a little storm of the hills. To her you were one of the sons of God, and you did not mate with the daughter of men."

"That," said Saul, "was impossible. You do not understand, Onesiphorus."

"Yes, I understand," said the goldsmith. "You are too great a man, and there is the tragedy of it. You would ask, Saul. We did not wish to tell you."

"Will she revert to old pagan days?"

"Thekla is a woman of breeding and honor, sir," Cleobulus flushed. "What she says, she holds by."

"Aye, and there's another tragedy," said the goldsmith. . . .

§ 5

How he came to Troy he did not know. The burning suns and freezing mountains of Asia should have killed him, so weak was he after his attack of

blindness among the Gallo-Greeks, and the queer disturbance of the brain that accompanied it. His stay there was one long nightmare. Pessinus, Tavium, and Ancyra, where he spoke with words terrible and swift as lightning to these mad Celts who had wandered so far from their western home. They were mad, these Galatians, cruel with the cruelty of the Druidic fathers; and Cybele, the mother of their gods, cruelest of all deities, was their choice of worship. They listened to him while in savage burning phrases he lashed them with the quiet compassion of Christ. And then horror came upon him. A thick darkness as of a night of rain came about him. His eyes were putrid and inflamed, and some pressure on the brain drove him mad as the raving eunuchs of Cybele, sounding their shrill-toned cymbals and echoing tambours in the pine-groves of Dindymus. He prayed to Christ with hands and heart outstretched to remove this dreadful stake in the flesh; and then, crazed with impatience and pain—there was so much to do and so little time to do it in—he cursed Christ as no old Jew of Jerusalem ever cursed the Galilean in such dreadful oaths. And he, the temperate, called for a heavy dulling wine, and he, the chaste, called for women with snoods and purple vests. Silas was appalled, could do nothing, but young Timothy, soft-footed, soft-handed, ever watchful, was there to help. His voice, his hand on Saul's hand, always soothed the stricken man. And he had ever wisdom. In Ancyra, where the great monument of Augustus raised itself proudly in the clear Galatian air, some freak of the head made

him furious that this warrior race, sprung from the loins of Brennus, sacker of cities, defeater of Rome, should so easily accept Cæsar. He told Silas and Timothy that he wished to speak under the white temple dedicated to Augustus. Silas, knowing what was in his mind, and all his Roman citizenship protesting, was against it, but Timothy only asked: "Are you well enough, dear master?"

He was like something from the grave, standing under the white temple, in white tunic and cloak, his eyes blindfolded in white linen, a white mask over his face to cover the hideous, spreading infection, his voice hollow as an echo of the tomb.

"What had this Augustus, this Cæsar? Cohorts, prætorian guards, Italian and Gaulish bands; many-oared, purple-sailed galleys of peace and war; pad-horses, racing-horses, chargers of battle; chariots like houses; great white palaces; coins of gold and coins of silver beyond the counting of human hands; acres of vineyard and acres of corn-field; oyster-beds and fisheries of lampreys; wands for walking abroad with in the cool of the days; swords for parades. What had Christ? A grooved file and plane, a line and ocher-box, a hammer, a rule, a drill-bow and rasp, an ax, a revolving auger and quick gimlet, four screw-drivers and a double-edged adze. Yet not Augustus, the emperor, but Christ, the carpenter, do I present to you as King of the World!"

The old warrior folk crowded about him, cheered him, listened breathlessly as this fearless citizen of Rome preached his gospel. The old fighting spirit,

that is of the mind first before it is of the hand, made them respect the masked evangelist. It was not Christ they cared for, but the speaker himself. Gods of the Gauls! but here was a man! Where were your subtle Greek philosophers now, your superior formal Romans? When the attacks of illness came on him, the drunken turbulent people stood outside the house where he lodged, stood quietly, waiting for news. There was found no physician among them who could prescribe for the dreadful ophthalmia caused by Syrian and Palestinian suns. When it was known he must go from them, they mourned. There was a physician in Troy, Silas had heard, a young man called Luke, who was little short of a magician. If they could only get to Troy, Saul's sight and reason might be saved.

"If we could help you, we would pluck out our eyes and give them to you," they said, as they took leave of him.

"O foolish Galatians!" was all he could say. But the tones expressed the words his tongue could not utter.

Saul felt a relief the moment the cool fingers of Luke removed the bandage from his eyes, and though he could only see the young physician but dimly, his heart went toward him. He was like an elder brother of Timothy's, so grave and Greek was his face. But where Timothy dreamed, where Timothy was like himself, Saul, Luke was quiet and practical. The man was a born healer. One felt better once in his presence. Saul was delighted to find he was a believer. He had a deep sense of eternity, and

though he knew more about John Baptist than he did about Christ, on all the main truths Saul found him to ring true as a gold coin.

"Why do you heal?" he asked the young man. And for an instant feared the answer. It might be because it was a lucrative calling, or because it was respectable, and gave a man standing, or because his father had been one, or some other shallow reason. But no!

"Because I am a physician from my mother's womb," Luke answered.

Saul was surprised to find that he had grown suddenly into a colossus in the minds of Silas and Timothy, and young Luke had the same strange obsession. He reproached the young physician with neglecting his calling on account of him. Surely there were children to succor, old men's pain to ease.

"There are many physicians in Troy, sir, who know their trade as well as I. And though I shall never, God forbid! be deaf to a cry of distress, to a woman in labor or a man in agony, to one and to all of us it is more important that you live and work than that the merchant in the bazaar or the porter in the street be tended. Sir, I am afraid you will never be able to travel without a physician."

"I am not a rich man, Luke. What I have is for the poor. I even work with my hands to have more for the poor."

"Sir, I am not poor. I will go with you, if you will have me."

Saul felt a little qualm at all this service and adulation. Poor Peter, with his rabble of fuglemen,

was ill served; and how Barnabas, treading the flinty shards of Crete, fared he did not know. But here was he, with his adviser, Silas, his secretary, and his personal physician. And he said to himself: "To justify all this, I must work the harder." What magic was in Luke's fingers and unguents he did not know. But here, by the calm sea-shore, in Luke's quiet garden, his eyes were coming back to him. The old city, whose blunt towers were burned for Helen's sake, the plain of Troy, shimmering with white shells, all were evident to him. The blue sea and the red and gold mountain—the blue Ægean and golden-leaved, many-fountained Ida, CEnone's mountain, were about them, and there to be seen were the barrows where Ajax and Achilles slept. In the distance were the high peaks of Imbros, and out of the magic sea rose Samothrace, breasted like a woman, where the zealots of the purple ribbon worshiped the dumb, graven Cabiri. Darkness settled over Ida and Tenedos, and in the east the moon rose. In Priam's city, the Troizenian men and women went, dignified as of old. While the water lapped the piers of old Ilion, young Timothy, moved by the quiet night, spoke in his low voice to Sylvanus and Luke, while Saul dreamed.

*Et iam Argiva phalanx instructis navibus ibat,
A Tenedo, per amica silentia lunæ,*

Timothy was reciting.

"Is not that wonderful, sir?" He turned to where Saul was quiet in the shadows: "Under the friendly silence of the moon."

But Saul was not listening.

"What is it, dear master? Of what are you thinking? Lucas!" he called quietly.

"I have seen," said Saul, "as in a vision of sleeping, a man of Macedonia, who prayed me, and said, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. . . ."

§ 6

She was purple. She was purple and magnificent. Her hair and eyes were purple, and her bosom-band was purple. There was about her the magnificence of Semiramis. Her large proud body was magnificent. As he preached in the little oratory by the river her great purple eyes listened; every accurate feature of her face, her bosom listened.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ."

He had heard of this strange woman in Philippi who had a queer power and was respected by Roman, Greek, and Jew. Everywhere he had gone in the city that was a microcosm of Rome, people spoke of Lydia, the seller of purple, a woman out of Thyatira, who was young and powerful and ranked with the greatest merchants of the Grecian coast. He had heard strange stories of her. Of how she had been married to a wastrel who had well-nigh ruined her dowry, and how, when she was yet young, the man had died, leaving her with two sons, now fourteen and sixteen, one in training to be a military commander in Cæsar's school at Rome, the other

at school in Athens. Herself was not yet much over thirty, but at her husband's death, she had begun to work like a man at her shattered fortune, and with some luck, hard application, and broad vision had made herself richer than before. A terrible foe in a bargain, the Greeks said, but the most generous woman in Philippi. A hundred men had sought to marry her, but in marriage she would have none, nor did any offer her less, so much dignity she had. She was not quite a Jewess, though she followed the ancient Noachic precepts. And every Sabbath of the Jews she and her Greek woman friends went to a little *proseucha* by the river, and prayed with them. Saul believed that if he gained her, he gained Philippi.

"Whatsoever things are true," he said quietly, "whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise—be such things your treasures. . . . Now, unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

She introduced, when he had finished, the apostle to her friends, Eubodia and Syntyche. She did not say much, but her very reticence was eloquent. She was like one who would show him, in private and in proper setting, her heart. He knew she wished to talk to him. She asked them all, himself, Luke, Timothy, and Silas, where they were lodged, and then invited them to come to her house.

"If you think me worthy," she added quietly, "to come to my house."

But Saul would not have them a charge on her.

"It is a big house," she said, "and an empty one. I am Lydia, perhaps you knew, the seller of purple, and you would be little charge on me. It would be a great privilege to have you. And you would be safer there."

"How, safer?"

"You see," she said, "how few Jews there are in our little praying-place."

She told him how recently Claudius had expelled all Jews from Rome, and wherever a very Roman city was, Jews were not welcome. He had not heard, being only recently come out of Taurus, that in Rome there had been dreadful disturbances. In the filthy ghetto at Ripa, near Transtiberina, where the underworld of Rome was, broken bottle dealers, litter porters, tanners, there had always been an intractable, treasonable Jewish population, pugilists, dancers, mendicants, followers of God knows what foul trade. Into that maze of small shops and infamous taverns the Roman police ventured rarely, but of late an Alexandrian named Chrestus, probably giving himself out as the Messias, had come there and found followers. And crazed by patriotism and starvation, Chrestus and his men had raised the banner of revolt against Rome in Rome's self. Claudius might have had them mown down by the Italian or Gaulish bands, but he had contented himself in banishing them all from Rome. The feel-

ing against Jews was so strong in Philippi that none would work beside a Jew on a bench. . . .

For himself and for Silas he did not fear. They were not *peregrini*, strangers, as the Roman term was for non-citizens, but for Timothy and Luke he was bothered, and Lydia had such a forceful way about her. Her quiet beauty and strength were about him like an encircling army.

"We will stay with you, Lydia, if you will have us."

She had such a sweet strong way, that he loved her speech, loved her silence more. Of all the women he had known she was the one who appealed most to him. There had been the childish, febrile love of his youth, Anna, the daughter of Caiaphas, and how little she was worth he did not take long to discover. Nossis, his wife, was still a wound in his heart, so little had he understood her, so selfish had he been. He could hardly bear to think of her, any more than he could bear to think of the dreadful day when he had been the hound of the Sanhedrim, when he was a worse scourge on the Christians than ever the Italian band had been upon the Jews. . . . That was a secret place of his heart that opened and bled now and then, as an old soldier's wound will open. However she understood now, she understood and forgave, being dead. . . . In Thekla he had had a strange delight, as a Roman might delight in some beautiful well bred horse, or an Arab sheikh in his coursing gazelle hound. She had such beauty and breeding, such a noble unbeaten heart. And Eunice, Timothy's mother, was dear to him,

so much faith she had. But Lydia was like deep unruffled water. She had fought and had lived, as he had fought and lived, and at the end of the struggle had come out triumphant. Her quiet voice, all the beautiful modest richness of her house pleased him. He felt they understood each other. She wished baptism for herself and her household, and when he smiled, she said simply: "We need a symbol, we women!" And he understood.

She was strange. She would not surrender her mind. Saul had been accustomed to either full acceptance or full negation. But Lydia chose what she wanted; rejected what she did not. And queerly, Saul was pleased with that. He had memorized, so greatly did it appeal to him, John's immense poem, as much of it as had been written. But somehow Lydia's mind dwelt on John Baptist. John Baptist at the Jordan, John Baptist fearless before Herod's bloody beard. . . . When he told her of Jesus' beautiful sayings: "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone. . . ." she had the light of understanding in her eyes.

"He was a great poet, a great genius, a great seer."

"He was the Son of God, Lydia."

"Yes, so he was. But John Baptist was a man!"

"But John Baptist said, Lydia: 'This is He of whom I spake. He that cometh after me is preferred before me.'"

"He was a great man. Saul, it is harder to be a great man than a Son of God."

He would not dispute with her, because she would not see. To her the kingdom and the power and the glory were existent, were forever, but her heart and spirit went out to the men with the aching shoulders: the grimy, strained faces; the battle-dazed eyes. . . . She was Lydia!

She was wonderful. To Timothy she was like an elder sister, listening with her quiet understanding smile as he spoke of Eunice, his mother, and of Lois, old and beautiful. And the grave silent Luke was loquacious with her, speaking hotly about the duties of his craft, all his finer soul coming out in scornful phrases. To Silas she was the woman of the world, the polished Macedonian matron, who could speak of government and movements in thought and politics with understanding and experience. With Saul she was silent, or when she spoke, it was in phrases pregnant with understanding.

"I love your word, Saul: 'the body of this humiliation,' " she would say, and a little shudder would pass through her. And then suddenly: "Saul, is all well with you here?"

All was well with him. He loved the little city, which was a reflection of great Rome. The hardy race of military men, the Latin tongue, the Roman standards, the Roman inscriptions on the coins, all were so honest, so masculine. The magistrates were not archons, but prætors. Every one he gained here was worth gaining. And there were no envious turbulent Jews. The quiet, secret word of Isidorus had obtained him safety in Asia, but here was no subtle underworld of treason, where the word of Isidorus

and his friends was more fearful than law. Here he was free. Talking to Thekla, with her sweet conquering way, her Greek way, his mind had wandered into strange rarefied countries; but here in Philippi, talking to Lydia, his visions were concrete. He had thought vaguely of one day speaking in Athens and attacking the thought of Rome, but very vaguely, as a possibility. But here was Rome, so to speak, and already he had Romans in his flock, men of character, of substance, like Epaphroditus, Clemens, and Syzygus, men of the old Marsian stock, disciplined in Roman legions, the flower of Rome. And Athens was but a few days' sail away.

"I should like to go to Rome and Athens," he told Lydia.

"But aren't you going?" she asked with surprise.

"Yes, of course I am going. Yes. I am going," he said himself, with more surprise than hers.

Now that he had a great aim in view, he worked with a cold fury. He saw in this congregation at Philippi a headquarters from which he could direct a campaign against all Greece, Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens' self. A place to fall back on in case of defeat, which God forbid. And because he felt they were brethren, heart speaking to heart, they understanding him and he them, he had no compunction in accepting their financial help. His heart swelled as he thought of them all. Each day at the *proseucha* by the river, there were more and more people to hear him. . . .

It seemed so stable, so builded on living rock, this edifice of Philippi, and yet the cheapest, merest

thing ruined all. Each day they went to the oratory from Lydia's house, a rabble of urchins, of do-nothings followed them, whining for alms, eager for some new thing to distract them. There were curses, obscenities, vile allusions to Lydia, such as the riff-raff of any town will make. But to these things they were accustomed, and their cold dignity had all but conquered it, when a wretched slave-girl joined the procession, an epileptic with wild eyes, and jingling brass anklets, and matted locks. She had, or was presumed to have, some talent of sooth-saying and was owned by two men or more, who had clubbed together to buy her, as race-horses of useful but not classic form are bought by shrewd, small men. Some madness, or evil within her, had attracted the more superstitious Greeks in the town, who paid money for her oracles, and she was noted—a pythoness of the slums. What weakness, or what desire in her, had made her follow Saul and Silas none knew, but she followed them at a distance, and the rabble increased. "These men are the bondsmen of the Most High God!" she kept crying, and waving her long, dreadful arms. There was a little froth about her lips, and her eyes held madness. Behind her and about her streamed the rabble of the town, eager for amusement. Saul and Silas paid no attention.

Saul felt sorry for the poor mad creature, but the rabble with her made it impossible for him to speak to her. He knew only too well the effect of cold dignity on a mob, and he knew also what a temptation it was to the thug and the infamous to hurl a

missile from the edge of a crowd, if he stopped to speak. But day after day she followed him, until it became a nuisance. At the oratory she waited mute, and with her the rabble waited, to follow her on the way back. And all the time conscience reproached him, for not helping her. He felt in her, as close as though he felt her body beneath her tattered smock, some evil thing, something evil and yet not utterly evil—an entity that had taken possession of her in some moment of mad debauch or weakness. And what possessed her was some poor tortured spirit, loving evil, and yet constrained to good. Out of the mouth of the demon, through her mouth, came the cry: "These are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation." Saul remembered the Hebrew tradition of the dark spirits which served Solomon, seeking in their clumsy, left-hand way to serve God. He remembered, too, stories of Jesus. He had heard from Matthew how in the country of the Gergesenes, he had cast devils out of two men who dwelt in tombs; ghouls, Matthew had said, "exceeding fierce." But Saul had thought to himself: two wretched bandits, crazed with want and the dreadful Gadarene waste, dwelling with the dead because they wanted shelter. So he had discounted the prim tax-gatherer's tale. But now he wondered. Also John had told him in Jerusalem that Jesus had said that in his name demons should be cast out.

He laid his hand on Silas' arm, and said, "Wait."

She was dreadful to see, a mock of womanhood. Her face was twisted and evil, and there was a dumb

agony in her eyes. Out of her wretched garment her bare breasts showed; her legs were bare. Her head was uncovered and disheveled. Saul looked straight into her eyes.

"I command thee," he said quietly, "in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her."

Her face twisted as if she were in an agony of labor. There was sweat on her brow and cheeks. And she shook as if in an ague. One instant he was looking at a woman in extremity of anguish, and the next he was looking at a girl, dazed, quiet, as if aroused from sleep. She drew a long breath of wonder, and her face was calm and peaceful. When she looked at Saul and Silas and the crowd about her, it was with knitted brows, as if she had never seen them before. She caught sight of her naked bosom, and threw her arms about it.

"Oh!" she said, and she reddened with shame.

She felt with one timid hand her uncovered head; and with a small cry, and the swift movement of a deer, she fled down the city streets. The rabble were silent and afraid.

He had all but forgotten the incident, except to ask Zeno, a servant of Lydia's, to find out did she still prophesy—the gift, or curse, had gone from her, Zeno found—when one afternoon, coming from the oratory, he found his way blocked by a mob that vomited out of the alleys of Philippi. His heart told him that here was trouble.

"You had better go back toward the *proseucha*, Silas," he said. But the little man bristled.

"Do you think me that sort of companion, Saul?"

Before he could speak they were upon him, with their shrill voices, their sweaty bodies, their dreadful faces. It was as if some trick of the tide had flung, into the city, the harbor's slime. Men with the cruel, cowardly faces of pimps, thugs and thieves of the waterfront, sailors' women with their scorbutic faces and horrible reddened eyes. A waterfront dandy stopped in front of Saul.

"So you are the Jew who killed the prophecy in our woman," he said in silky tones. "A Jew!" he said louder. And he struck Saul on the cheek. The Tarsan's nostrils quivered, and his lips tightened. But he did nothing. "A friend of Chrestus!" he shouted, and he struck him again. "Ho! citizens. Here are men whom great Cæsar chased from Rome, come to raise trouble in Philippi. You think we are rotten in Philippi, eh? Easy, eh?"

It was as if his loud shouting were a signal to the mob to fling themselves on the two, to buffet and kick them, to fling mud and tear at their cloaks. "Bring them to the magistrates!" some were shouting. "Philippi is loyal and true!" They were hustled, pushed, dragged, through the streets. "Here are traitors, citizens," the pimp kept shouting. "Cæsar's enemies. We are friends to Cæsar in Philippi. We are not Greeks nor lousy Jews." The easy loyalty of the mob became a frenzy. There was all but a riot. Out of the market, out of houses, came people not understanding, shouting for Cæsar. Half blinded, dazed with buffeting, they were

dragged to where the *duumviri* sat under their yellow awning. Behind them stood the sergeants with rod and ax.

The elder of the magistrates was a former military man, with all the stern command of his kind in his heavy face. The younger was a thin superior man, an official sent from Rome, perhaps, with the weariness of the little colonial city written in his tired face. Saul could not make himself heard. The cry of the accusers, the shouting against the Jews, the reiterated name of the Roman rebel Chrestus, drowned his voice. The elder *prætor* looked at the two tattered prisoners with sullen savagery, the younger with cold contempt.

"*Summove, lictor, despolia, verbera!*" the elder man directed. "Go, lictors, strip off their garments; let them be scourged." And before Saul rightly understood what was happening, they were binding his wrists to the rings of the pillar. His tunic was torn off. He heard the swish, felt the bite of the rods. . . .

The pain was so terrible that it was not sharp. It was as if every tendon in his body had been cut, every bone broken. The shouting dinned his ears, and foolishly, he kept asking himself: "Why can't they keep quiet?" The seventh or eighth stroke, he had forgotten to count, was too much for him, so that consciousness went from him, and he sagged forward, all his body dragging at his bound wrists. He returned to consciousness only with a cry of pain he could not stifle, when he felt the executioner's calloused hand rubbing salt into his raw,

stripped back. He saw Silas being treated in the same fashion. The little man was white, but his eyes were blazing with anger. But he could not speak to him, so loud still was the shouting. The pimps and assassins and the toss-pots of the wharves were still thirsty for cruelty, and yelling in their dreadful jargon, and their foul women-folk were dancing, and mouthing unutterable obscenities. Roughly their jailers threw their cloaks on their bleeding backs, and hurried them to the bridewell. They dragged them through the ordinary prison quarters to the dungeons. They kicked the feet from under them, and locked their ankles in the stocks.

Through the grille of the door there came the murky light of a lamp, and by its rays, or rather, its muddy current, Saul could see Silas leaning against the wall, his face white, his breathing heavy, and for an instant the Tarsan feared for his companion's life, but as he thought, his own broken body and tired mind suddenly gave way, and he fell asleep. It was as if Nature had intervened roughly, like some abrupt merciful physician.

The very quiet of the night awakened both of them. There was a dreadful imminence in the air. Time had stopped, as though some one had taken an hour-glass and laid it on its side. The spinning sun, the exact revolving moon, the stars, crawling from port to unimaginable port, were stilled. It was as if God had put his hand on the shuttle of the world and ended its swift clacking.

"Is it the end, Saul?" Silas asked.

"I don't know, brother. I don't know."

"Where is God my maker," said Silas, "who giveth songs in the night? Shall I pray, Saul?"

"Do, Silas."

In the still, smitten air the voice of Silas, half prayer and half song, rose in a strange triumphant chant. "Give thanks unto the Lord for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. . . . He satisfieth the longing soul . . . such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron. . . ."

Out of his early training, out of his feeling of awe in the dreadful night, Saul joined in. Their voices rang like trumpets in the heavy hopeless prison-house.

"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.

"He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and broke their bonds in sunder."

The earth suddenly shivered under them, like a man shivering from cold. And then it did a dreadful thing; it pitched downward like the pitching of a ship, like a ship pitching over a precipice of the sea into some horrible swirling pool. And then it righted itself, as a ship rights itself. And then it reared, as a horse rears, some killer horse, screaming and rearing and pawing the air with its fore feet before it falls backward on the rider. Even in the deep prison-cell, they could hear the crash of the houses in Philippi. It was as if some mad giant of a god, crazed with cruelty, were tearing the houses of men apart with horrible clawed hands, as

some madman might tear down and kick the houses little children make for their amusement with small sticks and stones. Above the crash and terror arose the cries of women and children, their pathetic screaming, and worse still, the screaming of men, like the dreadful screaming of horses. The door of the dungeon broke from its hinges, hung balanced, and then fell forward slowly, with a thud, like a killed man.

They looked at the opened prison-door dully, and dully at their shackled feet, at their feet clamped in great shackles of stone. Another pitching, another rearing, would bury them in a grave dug by no man's hands. But the movement in the earth changed. Force ran through it, like the quick gliding of a snake, like the flick of a trickster's hand, like the pattern lightning makes coming from sky to earth. The shackles and stocks broke asunder like a rope with a flaw in it. Silas stood upright and caught Saul's hands.

"For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder," he chanted. "Come forth, brother, come forth. The Lord hath set us free!"

They walked out through the corridor, none hindering, into the courtyard of the jail. A half-moon, yellow as a melon, hung on its back in the sky. And by its light, Saul could see the razed houses about the courtyard of the jail, and the jailer's own house, with one side fallen out, like a scene in some Egyptian puppet-maker's box. About them crowded the population of the cells, brutal-

looking, debased fellows, and keen, cunning men—criminals unafraid of the lash or cell or gibbet, but who had now a nameless fear written on their faces. Saul was dignified and calm, but there was a queer exaltation in Silas' eyes, and the convicts crowded about them for protection. A great hulk of a pugilist, blubbering like a child, held on to Saul's tattered cloak.

From the open jailer's house the governor came running in panic. He wore his silk night tunic, and his feet were bare. There was still sleep in his eyes, but he had buckled on his sword, as a soldier will. He looked around stupidly.

"The gates are broken, and the prisoners gone. Immortal gods! I am a broken man."

He drew his short, heavy thrusting-sword, and set it in a cranny of the wall. Its point winked at his breast. He ran backward a few steps.

"Do yourself no harm," Saul said quietly, "for we are all here."

"Who is speaking?" he turned around suddenly.

"It is Saul of Tarsus."

"Bring a light!" he shouted. "Ho! sergeants. Torches, quickly."

He came forward under the murky light of the torches. He looked stupidly at Saul and Silas. About them gathered, crouched, the criminals of the jail. Their eyes were heavy and mute, and waiting, like the eyes of animals, upon whom one had intruded in the dark.

"All is well," Saul told him. "You go much too fast, brother."

The governor came closer to them. Under his beard his face was gray.

"Are ye magicians?" he asked. "Did ye bring on the shaking of the earth?"

"We are not magicians," Saul answered. "We are but the servants of Christ."

"Of Chrestus?"

"No, of Jesus the Christos."

He brought them aside for an instant, away from the rabble of convicts.

"I was about to order your release," he told them nervously, "for I may as well let you know, there has been much trouble about you two. A certain lady, and many of the chief men of the town, have gone to the *duumviri*, and it seems a mistake has been made. I only await the word of the magistrates."

"You arrest me, flog me, lock me in the stocks, in the deepest dungeon," Saul smiled grimly. "And then you say: 'See, a mistake has been made. We regret it. You can go.' No," he said, "I will not leave this prison."

"But, sirs!"

"This is no time for argument, jailer," Silas broke in. "This man has had nothing to eat since yesterday's dawn, and see how his cloak is fast to his back with grime and blood."

"But come within, come within," said the governor, "and we will tend your wounds and give you to eat, and we will hear of the Christos," he added slyly. "I and mine."

Saul turned to speak with the prisoners, but so

quickly had the guard acted that they were away. While he was speaking to the governor, the soldiers had marched them away. They had gone into the jail, like sheep into the fold before the herdsman and the dogs, quietly like dumb driven sheep.

"Very well," Saul said, "we will go within."

Within was warmth and comfort, and of the folk who set meat before them, who tended their wounds with warm water and oil, hissing with pity at the sight of their terribly scored backs, Saul and Silas recognized many they had seen at the outskirts of the crowd by the river oratory. These were like old friends, and those they did not know stood by wonderingly. Only the governor walked up and down, nervously, fearfully.

"I am an old soldier, sirs, and it took me all my life to arrive at this position, and for this, I see, I am ruined. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Believe in the Lord Christ Jesus, jailer," Saul said grimly, "and your small pompous authority, your few drachmæ of gold, your profits in the prisoners' bread and oil, your discreet bribes, will be as nothing. Your life itself will be as nothing. Old soldier, you will then be a man."

"The sergeant of the *duumviri*!" announced the sentry.

Saul regarded the grim sub-officer's wooden face.

"Sirs, you are free."

"So—" he smiled. "We are free. The *duumviri* send their sergeant to tell us we are free. They sleep in their perfumed sheets, and cannot come themselves. But they remember to send their ser-

vant," he said silkily. "Ho, ruffian, do you know you speak to a Roman citizen, born free? Send the *duumviri* here."

Even Silas was appalled by his cold, steel-like fury. The governor, white as a sheet, left the room. Moodily Saul looked through the grilled window at the broken city. The moon had paled; the sun was coming up. A company of soldiers went through the empty streets at the double. Small mean men like jackals slid along the streets close to the wall—looters. A bullock-cart of water was being driven at breakneck speed somewhither. A cloud of dust, like a cloud of smoke, hung over the waterfront.

"Their honors the *duumviri* of this city!" the sentry called out. His short sword flashed into salute before his face. Saul turned.

"So this is how ye treat Roman citizens at Philippi, sirs."

The elder man was tired and seemed not to care. The younger civil servant was nervous, but his blandness had not left him.

"Rabbi," he said, "we did not know. The law is express on the teaching of subversive religions—"

"The Valerian and Porcian laws are express on the flogging of a Roman citizen. Sirs, ye are ruined men."

"Cæsar makes us, Cæsar breaks us," the old man said. "All my life I have served Rome, and I have done what I thought best for Rome. I am an old man, and brusque, impatient as to treason. I did not know you were Roman citizens. I should have

asked. I was wrong. I have made a mistake. I must suffer for it. If old age has not brought me patience it has brought me philosophy. Very well, I shall suffer—”

“A moment, sir,” said the young man. “Rabbi, let me appeal to you. You are proud of your Roman privileges. You are a son of Rome. Look, sir, our charge is great and wide, and we have so many enemies. From Britain to Arabia we have so many enemies. I am going to ask of you a great deal. I ask you not only to forgive us, but to leave Philippi, not to be martyrs. There are those in this city who would make you an engine against Rome. Rabbi, be great-hearted! Rome has helped you before. Rome asks you for help now. Rome will not forget.”

“What?” laughed Saul, “leave Philippi! Young sir, I perceive you are mad.”

“He does not understand,” the old man said wearily. “He does not know. Rabbi, have us broken. We treated you intolerably. But now you must forgive us if we go— Everywhere in this poor town of ours is trouble—people to be digged out of living tombs; mothers who have lost their children in the night, and children who have lost their mothers. I may not be a magistrate for long now—” he threw back his old officer’s shoulders—“but while I am, I take care of my people.”

A quick surge of shame went through Saul.

“I see myself for what I am now,” he said bitterly, “an empty, vain man. City fathers”—he went toward them with outstretched hands—“to-day we leave Philippi.”

CHAPTER XIV

§ I

ALL the hundred miles to Thessalonica, as he and Silas rode along the marble-paved Egnatian Way, with its mile-stones telling the stadia to distant Rome, Saul's mind was on Philippi. Luke and Timothy he had left behind, to carry on, to consolidate the work he had begun. He knew that forever in Philippi his preaching would flourish like the green bay-tree. The small islands, the flashing sea left them. Lakes appeared in the Macedonian hills, and here was Strymon bubbling toward the sea. At Amphipolis of the Nine Ways they stopped for their meager supper of scones and buffalo-milk.

The thought of Lydia bothered him a little. She had been cold and furious. The anger of Semiramis could not have been more cold, more bitter than hers. That they had dared to scourge and imprison Saul, her guest, in the city she had made her own—She could not speak.

He looked in her eyes quietly, and little by little the anger went out of them, and she was quiet again, quiet as a child. She gave a long sobbing breath, as a child gives, after a fury of sobbing. "I heard a merchant out of China say," she thought, "that the small can do no hurt to the great. Their

persecution only makes the great greater, and their own smallness more small. They had a great philosopher once, the men of China; his name I have forgotten. But he was hard, brilliant as diamonds. The Galilean was like a hill in flower, and you, Saul, are like some great brown rock that hurls back the sea. The diamond is lost, or is worn as an ornament. With each dawn of spring the flowery hill is reborn, and Poseidon, King of the Sea, all his fury cannot wreck the vast brown rock."

"Christ Jesus," said Saul quietly, "is King of the World, and I am the meanest of his ministers."

"So!" said Lydia.

They were alone in the great formal room of Lydia's dwelling-place. Silas and Timothy had gone out to procure horses for the morrow, and Luke had gone to the *duumviri* to tell them that Saul could not leave until dawn. Again the waning moon had risen like a lamp, and from the lamps the light of thrice-strained olive-oil shone clear as silver. In the gardens of her house the nightingales were flooding the night with song. It was hard to believe that within a few miles Philippi lay on its back like a crippled giant.

She would not, she could not be still. She went hither and thither moving a lamp, a scarf of Damascene brocade, an amphora of flowers. She sat casually at a great Egyptian harp and for a minute played on it a troubling melody of her native Lydian land. And then, brusquely rising, she went to the doors opening on the garden and looked into the golden night.

"You go to-morrow to Thessalonica?"

"With to-morrow's dawn."

"Shall I go with you to Thessalonica?"

Her back was to him. She was still looking into the golden night, as though the night were everything and her words nothing.

"I said, Saul: shall I go with you to Thessalonica?"

"Why, Lydia? I am strong enough. Even Luke says that. Persecutions do to me what rest does to other people. They give me health, so queerly am I made—"

"There are other things, Saul. I could help you. My word in Macedonia has great weight. And you are stubborn, Saul. A woman's mind, a little tact, can make things so easy, where you would charge like a mad bull against a wall."

"You could not come, Lydia. See, there are so many charges on you, as many as on a great man. Your fisheries, your dyeing-vats, all the people who gain their livelihood by your trafficking—"

She said quietly: "Let them go!"

"But you couldn't, Lydia. See, you are not like the poor Greek girl. You are known, and, for all your former marriage and your two fine boys, you are womanhood in flower. And the tongues of cheap people, Lydia, can be as poisonous as a viper's fangs."

She had come toward him. She came into the room quietly. Her handsome marble face had the flush of a young girl's.

"There is such a thing as marriage, Saul."

He was so surprised he could not speak. There was an uncomfortable silence. She laughed a little nervously.

"It is strange," she said, "so many men have asked me to marry them, and now I ask a man."

"You would sacrifice all this," he waved his hand. In his gesture were the limpet-pools of Tyre, the dyeing-vats on the shore, the counting-house at Philippi, the great country estate, the nightingales in the trimmed formal trees. "You would sacrifice all this for the Way."

"No," she answered. "I will be honest. It is not for the Way. Must I say it? I shall say it." Her voice was troubled; her eyelids lowered. "Before you came here, my heart was like a tidy, formal room. And now some one lives there. It is untidy. It is full of life."

"It is the Lord Christ Jesus who has entered your heart."

"You do not understand me. Perhaps you do not wish to understand me." She went across the room to where the great Egyptian harp was, and examined it as though she had never seen it before. "I wonder if you are afraid, Saul. There may be a place in your heart that is sacred. Very well. I should not ask that place." She ran her hand down the sounding pillar of the harp. "I am, after all, a gentlewoman."

"Lydia," he said quietly, "my beard is all but white. Old age and hardships will soon clamor for the payment of their bill of charge. Half bald, half blind. A few more years' intense work, and I go to my death in Jerusalem, as my Master did. What is

ugly in myself is I; what is gracious in me is Christ Jesus. You do not love Saul, Lydia; you love the Christos. Do you see?"

"I see," she said quietly. "I see."

She pushed her silver foot, in its sandal of rose leather, toward the great harp.

"So," she said, "I shall go on loving the Christos. But I must not lose my friend Saul. We shall always be friends, is it not so, Saul? You will be fond of me, after your fashion?"

. . . They had left Apollonia at dawn, and were now riding through the plain of Axios. On their left the blue sea, with the snowy mount of Olympus, showed like a mirage in a desert. Silas was bowed in the saddle, his flayed back hurting him beyond belief. His face was white as the white plains of Troy, and occasionally a little groan escaped from his lips. But Saul heard nothing, saw nothing. He brooded on.

"Let us make a bargain," she had said, "to be ever old friends. Wherever you go, Saul, there will be women who will be fond of you. Brazen, forward women, like myself," she smiled wanly, "or silent, timid women. Where the great conquerors or the great conquered pass there will always be women's hearts and bodies to pave the road. The conquerors taste, and laugh, and throw away, and the great conquered pass by with bloody heads and twisted fighting faces, and never see, and are loved the more for it. Let me be more than one woman on the way. Give me what you would give to a man who was dear to you once."

"We are friends for ever and ever."

"That is a contract sealed. And now, a friend may ask favors. I want you to use our purses in Philippi as though they were your own. I know how proud, how stubborn about money you are. And how hard you are upon yourself. But you are too hard on others, Saul. You are like that Cato of Utica, who because he could pardon no fault in himself, could not pardon it in others. And Timothy is such a boy, Saul, and Luke such a dear lad. Don't be hard on them. Would you accept our help?"

And then she said: "I knew you wouldn't."

"But I will, dear Lydia."

"You make me happy, so happy you could not understand. And now, my old friend, good night. I shall not see you in the morning when you go. I had rather not. . . . The next time we meet we are old friends, are we not? Good! Then—good night."

And she was gone.

"See, Saul! Thessalonica!" Silas croaked in his cracked, tortured voice.

Saul raised his head. Before him was a triumphal arch of white marble, with five carved bulls' heads bearing garlands—the monument of the Battle of Philippi which Octavius and Antony had won.

"Before we go to Jason's house, Silas, let us find the synagogue of the Jews, for there is something I would say to them."

Silas did not answer, and Saul turned to look at him. He had fallen, like some dead warrior, across his horse's forehead and neck. His feet were out of the irons; his stiff extended arms still held the reins.

Pain and exhaustion had been too much for Silas; he had fainted.

§ 2

He was becoming so wise now. In Thessalonica the turbulence of the Jews never worried him. Quietly he preached in the synagogue, while they howled as dogs howl.

"For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him.

"To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

"Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor the end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

"Now consider how great this man was. . . .

"For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

"And it is yet far more evident; for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

"Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

"For he testifieth, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. . . ."

After the hard, close Hebraic argument, where he had to use all his Sanhedrist learning and logic, it was a relief to go down to the market-place and preach to the multitude, dyers and potters, saddlers, masons, boat-builders, sailors, carpenters, poor straight folk who worked with their hands. Here was no subtlety of Judaistic history and theology to preach, but something out of the heart:

"The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one to another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

"To the end that he may establish your hearts in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints. . . ."

Around the borders of the crowd, wherever he spoke, were now evil-eyed, silent men, a type he recognized, pimps, assassins, toss-pots of the waterfront, the scourings of the town, usurers' bullies such as had troubled him in Iconium and Lystra. Every one in the Jewish community had heard of the scourging at Philippi, and of how, when he had held the magistrates of the city in the hollow of his hand, he had forgiven them. That they could not pardon. Had he wished, he could have been a Jewish martyr, a national asset. "See the great Roman justice!" they would have screamed. "Here is a Roman citizen. But because he is a Jew, he is treated like a dog!" They were so apparent. He knew to an instant when, crazed with passion, and appealing to the law they hated, they would apprehend him in Jason's house, and hale him before the magistrates, shouting against treason. They to be

shouting against treason! But when Sopater, Gaius, and Secundus, hearing evidently of Philippi, treated him with courtesy, allowed him bail, and the next morning discharged him, there was a sullen quiet among the Jews that warned him of danger. His month's work in Thessalonica had been the best of his life. He knew it would not fail. Quietly he left.

Nor did he leave any too soon. At Berea, where he stopped to preach in the synagogue, there appeared suddenly a group of haggard men, men tired with riding, men with burning eyes, men whose nostrils twitched, men whose right hands caressed their left sleeves, where their keen Zealots' daggers were.

"Now the just shall live by faith"—he was quoting from Habakkuk—"but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

He saw the Zealots, a little fascinated, come out of the dark shadows of the synagogue. He watched them warily.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. . . . Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. . . ."

They were there, coiled, deadly, ready to spring, like a snake, but he knew them so well! To the quick theological argument, they were as obedient as the snake to the charmer's pipe. They were as easily lulled. To-morrow they would be still as deadly, as to-morrow the snake would be deadly, the charmer striking a false note.

"By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."

They were nodding quietly. The old Hebrew names were like an incantation over them. They were smiling peacefully as a melomaniac smiles at some beloved air.

"And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and the prophets.

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of liars."

He came closer to the ascetic-faced messengers, watched them with his hooded eyes. "Quenched the violence of fire," he went on, "escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

"Women received their dead raised to life again"—he called to their mind the widow of Sarepta and the Shunamite—"and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection."

He was close to them now, so close that his eyes looked into their eyes. The rest of the synagogue were silent and chilled.

"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment"—he might have been speaking of the seven brethren and their mother tortured by Antiochus; he might have been speaking of himself. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword." His eyes threatened them like the blades of spears. "They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. . . ."

He walked out through the thirsty daggers into the night air. Not a blade left its greased sheath. But with the morning he was gone. He could not afford to risk the daggers of the Zealots. There was so much to do . . . !

§ 3

Above him the Acropolis towered like a threat. Beneath him was the temple of the awful goddesses, the dreaded Eumenides. Around him was a circle of smiling faces, cynical, ready to jeer. Before him stood Agathias, the bully of the scholastic philosophers, who, with cynical humor, had him come from the Agora up the rock-hewn steps to the Areopagus, standing on the "stone of impudence" where once great Socrates had stood. There was a terrible parody intended. They had called him babbler, "spermologos"—seed-picker, or pickpocket of philosophy. They were ready to enjoy his discomfiture:

"Ye men of Athens," he began, "all things which

I behold bear witness to your carefulness in religion. For as I passed by and beheld the objects of your worship, I found an altar with this inscription:

“ΑΓΝΩΣΤΩΙ ΘΕΩΙ.

“‘To the Unknown God.’

“Whom, therefore, ye worship ignorantly, him I declare unto you.

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

“Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all, life and breath and all things;

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

“That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, though He be not very far from every one of us.”

He looked around the assembly. Their faces were bored. Their faces were smiling. Only in two could he read any interest or sympathy. One was of a woman with red-gold hair and a sad face, some hetæra of the expensive class, and an old man, whose face was wrinkled like an ivy-leaf. That was Dionysius, he knew, a member of the court of the Areopagus. Yes, he knew the woman, too. Some workman had coarsely pointed her out to him. Damaris, that was her name.

"For in Him we live and move and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said:

"'For we are also His offspring.'"

"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." He looked boldly toward the revered Parthenon, to where Minerva's helmet twinkled in the sun, to where were kept the miracles of Phidias in ivory, gold, and stone.

"Howbeit, those past times of ignorance God hath overlooked, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all, in that He hath raised him from the dead—"

As though at some unseen signal, a vast shouting laughter was hurled against him. It was as though they had awaited and now were appreciating some exquisite buffoonery. Their faces were red, like the faces of drunken men. They slapped their thighs. Tears rolled down their cheeks. At each effort he made to continue they laughed more. He faltered and stopped.

Agathias was looking at him with his quiet cynic's smile.

"We will hear thee again on this matter," he said with insulting courtesy.

He wished, as he stumbled down the sixteen steps

toward the ground, that he had remained in Berea, and been finished by the Zealots' daggers. They were more merciful than the loud laughter, the contemptuous wave of the hand, the cutting smile. The rugged features of Dionysius, the sweet sad face of Damaris, sent him messages of sympathy. But he did not see them. He groped his way through the hooting multitude, blinded with shame.

CHAPTER XV

§ I

SHE was so holy that she dwelt apart—the Τὸν Διώπετος, the Fallen from Heaven—in a dim, twilight room. A curtain of gold-wrought purple protected her from all eyes. Her secret chamber had a roof of gilded cedar, supported by green jasper pillars. Before the curtain was an altar hewn by great Praxiteles. She was so great that her temple had fourteen vast marble steps, and pillars so high that on their base were carved full-sized figures of men and women. And none could pass the great cypress doors of her dwelling-place, but with bared feet and spotless bodies. She was so revered that within an arrow-shot of her dwelling-place no free-man could be apprehended, no matter what crime was to his charge. She was so modest that none but gelded priests and virgin nuns could serve her.

She was so rich that her treasures held merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls and fine linen, and purple and silk and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood. Within her portals gleamed the great golden statue of Artemidorus. From the top of her temple vast forests could be seen in the midst of the sweet

Cayster-watered Asian plain, oak, cypress, poplar, plane-tree, myrtle, and bay, all were hers, planted for her privacy. Her very presence was so inspiring that here men's throats turned to gold. Her mantle was flung over Lesbos, and Smyrna, and Helicarnassus, and the songs of the poets were like prayers to her beauty. Here Anacreon sang and Thales thought, and Mimnermos wrote his elegies, sad as a dove's lamenting. Anaximander and Anaximenes had probed the secrets of the world, and Heraclitus the Dark, the deepest of all Greeks, had sought truth like a hunter. Here Parrhiosius and Apelles had dreamt their immortal art. Such beauty did she invoke that hosts of wild white swans hovered about her mystic place.

She was so memorable that none could leave her city without a statue of her, wrought in gold or silver, porcelain, or even lava or wood—a small, pretty woman, with a little castle on her wavy hair, about her wrapped a skirt on which were animals and strange symbols, and between her feet a honey-bee. She was so royal that the folk of the city called themselves Neocoros, "temple-sweeper."

To her market-place, so great was she, came all the wares of the world: corn from Egypt, glass and brass of Sidon, dyed silks of Tyre, wine and fruit from Cyprus, oil from Palestine, hides and horses from Arabia, jewelry from Damascus, and hordes of slaves, their backs bent from weariness, their bare feet chalked as a sign to buyers. Here were harlots, here philosophers. Here the greatest race-course in Asia. Here a circus where panthers and

lions and great baboons of Africa, and bears from Tibet, and wolves from Greece, were loosed on the yellow sands to fight against narrow-eyed, supple-muscled, cunning men. Here the seven sons of Scæva sold their accursed malignant charms. Here Apollonius of Tyana spoke of true philosophy through his thin, scorn-twisted lips.

She was so cold, so aloof, that possibly all this meant nothing to her. There she stood in her dim apart room, a grotesque clumsy figure of black stone, dressed in many-hued garments of silk and gold, each color having its meaning. She was like the doll some child of a rich merchant might pick out of the gutter, disdaining the masterpieces of the puppet-maker, and, with a queer passionate affection, deck with ribbons, with lace of gold and lace of silver, with necklets and anklets, with toe-rings and rings for the fingers. Very removed, very distant she was, but through grove of bay and myrtle, through door of brass and door of marble, past great altar and rich silken curtain, from the market-place, from the stall of copper-smith and wine-seller, from the booth of the mountebank, from the harlot's house, from the philosopher's quiet cell, the invocation of her people came to her, like the murmur of her own golden-winged, brown-bellied honey-bees:

"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

§ 2

Well, he was finished, Saul thought, and he thanked God. All the fighting, all the persecution

was finished. Just one more trial. . . . He had succeeded. Here in Ephesus was peace. Peter could lord it in Antioch; James and Jude could be Brethren of the Lord in Jerusalem. They could hurt him still, but he had succeeded. All was over. He wanted a little while to think, to be loved, and he could go again to Jerusalem and die. Christ, from the Greek heavens, flamed from his cross as never did Orion or the Pleiades. Where Greek was spoken Christ lived. Saul's work was done.

Though they were enemies to him, Peter, and James, John's brother, and the bitter Jude, he was no longer enemy to them. Indeed, he had made sacrifices for them, whose depth they would never understand. He had sent Silas to Peter. And Silas had become dear to him, nearly as dear as Barnabas. And each day he worked hard with needle and coarse thread in the sail-loft of Aquila and Priscilla that Peter might have for himself the little comforts he needed. The money that Lydia and the Philippians had settled on him for himself he sent to Peter. He got no thanks for it. Well, what did he need with thanks!

With the passing of all fighting, all enmity out of his heart, there had come to him, somehow, a gift of friendship, of healing that he could not understand. He had helped people in distress at Ephesus, had cured so many of them, that they bribed servants for his clothes, thinking there was some special virtue in him, that even the least thing he touched must hold it. Invoking his name, they tried to cast out demons. All in the city of Ephesus revered

him. In the old days they had revered and feared him. Now they revered and loved him, and his poor old scarred heart flowed over with tears of thankfulness.

Now definitely and forever his lot was with the Greeks. Wherever the Greeks were, he was safe. Both Jew and Jewish Christian hated him with an abiding hatred. They might—it was improbable, but they might!—have forgiven him everything, but the riot at Corinth, where they dragged him before the proconsul Gallio, *dulcis Gallio*, Seneca's brother, and the high-minded, tragic-eyed Roman governor had dismissed the plea with contempt, had curled his lips at the subterranean intrigue and savage animosity. Quietly and indifferently he had looked on while the Greek mob took and beat Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue. The Jews screamed for protection from the Grecian mob, but the calm proconsul looked toward the snowy heights of Parnassus and Helicon, as though he saw neither the turbulent mob, nor the haggard nervous apostle, nor the beaten Sosthenes. . . . They never dared touch Saul again, but with each great friend he made, with Gaius, with Chloe, with the chamberlain of the city, Erastus, their anger grew. . . .

When he went to Jerusalem to bring offerings for the poor Christians of the city, he was received with coldness. Peter he had met at Antioch, and Peter had been formally friendly, but at Jerusalem, James and Jude, and the Pharisaic Christians, anger came from them like a cold Mediterranean wind. They implored him to leave Jerusalem quietly.

They could give him no protection, they said. Indeed, he was a danger to the Church there, if the Zealots knew he were here. He was not in Greece now, he must remember—thus James and Jude!—under the protection of proconsuls and city chamberlains and rich women. . . . He smiled a little coldly and left. He had in his mind to ask them what they had done with Christ. He saw little trace of the Master there. Indeed, they avoided mentioning him before Saul, as one avoids mentioning an affair of the family before a stranger. He thought of the flaming enthusiasm of the Greeks; and leaving them their share of the Grecians' charity, which they had the grace to avoid counting before his eyes, he left. . . .

Aquila and Priscilla, the sail-makers and tent-weavers, whom he had met at Corinth, and in whose loft he had worked, had left Corinth for Ephesus, and because they were there, and because, too, he had heard of a new great preacher from Alexandria, who taught the resurrection at Ephesus, he had decided to go to the city of Diana. He had expected to arrive in Ephesus unknown, but to his surprise a crowd were awaiting him, to escort him to the synagogue, which old, bent Aquila, and the hard-faced, loud-voiced, warm-hearted Priscilla, had gathered, all interested to meet him. They told him of Apollos, who had gone to Corinth, a great-framed, massive-headed man, subtle with the subtlety of Egyptians, and yet with a tremendous presence. The Jews in the synagogue had listened to Apollos, but Saul found soon that though they might listen to Apollos, they would not listen to him.

He took advantage of the offer of a Greek teacher of rhetoric, by name Tyrannus, to hold meetings at his school; and, to his surprise, the big debating-room was filled not only with Ephesians, but with men from Colossæ, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. Men of the district came up to welcome him, Epaphras, Archippus, Philemon: this one; that one. . . .

He did not argue, with close-knit logic, Apollos having satisfied their minds. He was very simple. He felt his heart full, and he tried to give them the liquor of his heart. He was very simple, very quiet.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. . . .

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is vowed. . . ."

He knew now he was drawing toward his death, so kindly was every one to him. The sharp eyes of Luke never left him, and Timothy was ever by his side. As he sewed in the sail-loft, the son of Eunice was ready with the apparatus of the scribe to write at his dictation; his rolls of papyrus, his lead disk to mark the furrows for the pen, his whetstone and

knife, his notched reeds, his ink-box and little sponge.

"When I was a child," he dictated—the heavy sail-maker's needle drove through the thick cloth—"I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly"—the rest of the workers in the room had laid their task away and were listening, and all to be heard was their deep breathing, the scratching of Timothy's pen, the sound of Saul's voice—"but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three—" he paused, thinking an instant; his voice fell—"but the greatest of these is charity. . . ."

Wherever he went now in the city, always under the sharp eyes of Luke, always accompanied by Timothy, old men touched their foreheads and young women turned to look. He went through the bazaars where, in small sacks, the riches of Asia and Africa were piled for sale: balsam of Arabia; papyrus of Egypt; dates of Phœnicia; ivory of Libya; carpets from Babylon; goats' hair from his native province; wool of Lycaonia; Phrygian slaves. Wherever he went, the sick, the crippled, the troubled waylaid him. For each he did his best, praying until the sweat stood almost in blood upon his forehead, and until Luke cried furiously: "No more!"

"But, Luke, dear Luke—"

Luke was hard as a buckler of brass. "I said: no more. Ho, shallow Ephesians! Would you kill your friend and healer." And calling for aid, he shouldered a way for Saul through the mob. For sanctity and charity his name became known through the whole city and province. The Beni Sceva, the seven exorcists who professed to eject demons, were now using his name, coupled with that of Jesus in cases where the Ring and Key of Solomon were of no avail. There was told a terrible story of them: that a maniac, whom they tried to cure, turned on them with flaming eyes, and demoniac strength. "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" And leaping upon the seven of them, he worried them with frothing jaws and gnashing teeth as a mad dog harries, until torn and bleeding and naked they fled away. Out of their dark lairs the Magi came by night to Saul, expecting to find in him some deeply versed Kabbalist, who, by study, had power over devils. They found a worn-faced, white-headed man, who held them intensely by his eyes, whose clear wisdom swept away their magic-heavy clouds, who persuaded them—they did not know how—to burn their obscene Ephesia Grammata, their books of ridiculous and horrible sorcery, compiled out of the mud and madness of the East.

He had sent to Corinth a message to have Apollos come to him, for he was vastly interested in, and a little afraid of, this polished Alexandrian, who had at his finger-tips all the arts that himself lacked; all the tradition of Alexandrian scholarship, of the

men who had translated the Hebrew Law into Greek. A man to whom Greeks and Jews would listen. When Apollos came he reminded him a little of Barnabas, so vast his frame was, but Barnabas did not have his dignity, his depth of eye.

"Are you satisfied with me, dear master?" Apollos asked.

"Who am I to be satisfied with you, Apollos? And who am I to be your master? You are so clever, so learned, so young!"

"I am clever and learned," Apollos smiled. "But how many are that! And I can fascinate men's minds, but the next fascination wears that away, as the magpie is drawn by the next bright thing. But a word of yours, dear master, goes to the heart and grows and blows like a flower. What have I done but argue in universities, and you have walked where sands burn and the days are dazed with heat and the nights dim with poison, and God has wrapped you in his mantle. That which Is, and Was, and ever Will Be, that which I sense, shadowed in Three and Seven, you know It face to face. I preach and teach. My consciousness strives to touch the infinite. And I fail, Saul, I fail. I have never said before to any soul how I fail. Dear master, you do not know how tempted I am to leave the resounding halls, and refuge in some little isle of Greece, and watch the silent ships float by. I am sick of thought, Saul. I grow weary for wheat and wine."

He looked for an instant at the great frame of Apollos, the broad brow and massive features. Beneath all the power and dignity he saw the trouble

in the eyes. He put his hand on the hand of the Alexandrian mystic.

"Be simple, beloved brother Apollos. Listen to me, and be not angry with an old man. I know the turbulence and enmity of philosophic schools. And how the difference in thought, thin as a blade of anise, will make a lifetime's hatred. Apollos, let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to every one, tender-hearted, forgiving each one, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. When the heart is like an unruffled pool at the evening, the Logos comes. This is wisdom, brother. See, was not I bitter, full of anger and battle? Did I not withstand Peter to his face? Misunderstood? Calumniated? Until the sounding of the Logos in my heart was but a cricket's chirp. I have put it away, Apollos, and now the thunder of the seas is but the soft breathing of God."

"As I listen to you, Παῦλος, the terror and defeat, the red glare of hell pass away, and the silver figure, the golden locks of Christ fill the sky for me." The singing Greek of the Egyptian poet filled the room with music, and Saul understood how the man had swept Corinth and Ephesus from their feet. "I see Him, newly revealed, Lord of the Sky, born of old time, new-born son, ever existing and preëxisting, highest and last, coeval with the Immortal Father, in all ways like Him. Paulos, my master—"

"No man's master, beloved Apollos, but just Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ!"

§ 3

All day long the city had buzzed with dull anger, like a nest of wasps. From sook and market-place the cry of the townsman: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" had thundered like a call to battle. For months now the gild of silversmiths had nursed a bitter rancor against Saul and his associates. The little figures of Diana, many-breasted, mystic-runed, with her honey-bee between her feet, made of silver or gold or precious stone; the replicas of the temple, carved cunningly in ivory or fashioned in bronze, lay on their shelves, dust settling on the goddess' shoulders, dust filling the miniature courts. The visitors to Ephesus no longer sought the great temple, the bay-trees of Diana, but went to hear the gaunt figure with the burning eyes who preached of a God who did not dwell in a temple made with hands, and not in whose groves, but in whose Son's heart, was sanctuary for each broken soul. The copper temples in the sooks grew green with mold; the feet of the passing camels raised a dust that made the small goddesses seem tawdry and gray. And against the Jews, all through the Empire, a bitter feeling was growing—the turbulent treasonable people who turned their back on Cæsar to look toward their own Temple in Jerusalem. So with the coming of Artemis' month, and the slackness in the purchase of their wares, the silversmiths lost all patience. The festival seemed hollow. More turned to the disciples of the Tarsan prophet, than watched to see

the dancing of the bloated, beardless Persian eunuchs, with their flutes and jangling timbrels, and the mad priestesses with streaming hair and torches of pine. The processions that filled the streets with their alytarchs, and mock Apollos and Hermes, in robes of tissued gold and crowns set with carbuncles and pearls, might have been so many funerals, so little attention was paid to them. But suddenly the syndic of the silversmiths, with all their workmen and dependents, blinded with anger, shouting, "Great is Diana!" began to speak against Saul. And suddenly the mob, with the fickleness of Orientals, took up the cry, and catching hold of two of Saul's disciples, Macedonian men, Gaius and Aristarchus, rushed with them to the theater. The mad priests, the townsfolk, the camelmen joined in, shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" They moved in a gray wave toward where the proconsuls sat.

Saul was sitting with Aquila in his dwelling-house when the news came to him that Gaius and Aristarchus were taken, and when he had asked where Timothy was, and was informed that the boy had gone out of the city and was not concerned in the riot, his heart gave thanks. Even into Aquila's quiet house the sullen thunder of the mob's anger came, that is more beastly than the sound of any beast. He reached for his staff. But Aquila barred the way.

"You shall not go!"

"My children are in danger, Aquila. I must be with them."

"Your children are in no danger. Ho! you have been in Ephesus three years, and you know nothing

of Ephesians. They will do none any harm, save by due process of law."

"I must go."

"You shall not go."

A queer, obscene burst of sound broke in on them, and Saul thought he could distinguish: "Paul to the lions!" and, "Death to the temple-robbers!" It was like the roaring of the lions on the yellow sands.

"Listen," Aquila urged, "if you appear there will be a terrible outbreak. And I have sent to find news. Here is Philo, from the Asiarch. What news, Philo?"

The Ephesian was smiling and bland.

"The Asiarch's message to Saul, the citizen, the tent-maker. Stay within. All is well. Your friends are untouched."

The Asiarch's messenger told, with complacent laughter, of how the Jews had put forward Alexander, the coppersmith, to explain that the Jews had nothing to do with Saul, and how the mob had turned on them, and shouted their spokesman down, and were for letting Gaius and Aristarchus go, and pillorying Alexander. "The Recorder is speaking to them now, and you know what influence he has!"

But Saul was silent and grave.

"I shall leave Ephesus. I have spoiled their festival."

"But God of our fathers! Why will you go? Look, the proconsul Celer is your friend. Everybody in Ephesus is your friend. A few sweepers of camels' dung make a riot. What do you care?"

"If I stay, Aquila, the silversmiths will always

hate me. If I go, the church will still go on. I shall go."

"But whither?"

"Jerusalem."

Without, the thunder of the populace still grumbled, a rumbling, threatening noise. But within, the stricken silence had come over every one. The mention of Jerusalem was like the producing of a shroud. A strange exalted look came into Saul's eyes. And suddenly a slave-girl burst into a passion of weeping. . . .

§ 4

His journey toward Jerusalem was like that of a conquered king going to his death. He had now in his mind the fixed idea that wherever he went would be riot and civil commotion. And were he to abide in any town, it would only be to the detriment of religion. In Corinth, where Apollos was, sects were brewing, and he knew were he to live there it would only serve to bring matters to a head. His letters would have more power than his aged self. He loved and understood Apollos, and to be there would only irritate the Egyptian mystic, perhaps make an enemy of him. Peter was in Antioch. There he could not abide for fear of trouble with Peter. In Philippi, well, he could not be Lydia's pensioner there. Tarsus, the town whence he was sprung—he was too old, too much the man of action to live quietly in retirement.

And now he knew, too, that the Zealots in Jerusa-

lem were whetting their knives afresh. They were appalled by the vast work of the Tarsan apostle; and to their schemes, their dreams of rebellion, he was a menace. He had robbed Judaism of half a million possible converts, and so of half a million possible rebels against Rome, when the Day should dawn. Also of the new emperor Nero, the first four years of whose reign had been as mild, as just, as the reign of Augustus, he had spoken with favor, unto a people to whom his every word was law. Judah the Gaulonite was everywhere preaching against the Roman tribute, and the Ebionites were howling like dervishes that now was the reign of Antichrist. But calmly Saul sent messages to the converts at Rome: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," he was reported to have written, "for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever then resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God!" And the dagger-men of the Temple stroked their left sleeves with their right hands when his name was mentioned: "Saul of Tarsus? Saul of Tarsus? Who is Saul of Tarsus?" they asked with a seeming of ignorance. "Ah, yes," they would smile, "you mean: the dead man."

It was as though he were already dead, and his soul just abiding in his body to finish a contract of work. Everywhere he had converts in Greece he went to bid them farewell. The Ephesians insisted on Tychicus and Trophimus, two lean, ascetic young men, accompanying him and Timothy. Saul knew them as quiet converts, but Timothy knew them as wrestlers and athletes. At Berea old Sopater

insisted on going with him; and near Troas, old Gaius of Derbe joined them. The old shepherd king was mild as milk, but beneath his cloak, unknown to Saul, hung a terrible two-edged sword. At Thessalonica the brethren detailed Aristarchus and Secundus to go forward like scouts to Troas.

The journey passed like a journey in a dream. He sent Titus forward from Ephesus to Corinth with a letter, and a request for offerings for the poor at Jerusalem, and while he waited for him at the house of Lydia in Philippi, he fretted for him. What was going on at Corinth? He heard vague rumors of Apollos being hailed as equal to Christ. When Titus came, bearing news that all the trouble at Corinth had been exaggerated, his heart rose again.

He wept when he took leave of the Philippians, and the Philippians wept with him, all but Lydia. Dry-eyed, proud-faced, and upright, she was silent until he came to her. And then she looked at him.

"Saul," she said quietly, "is this Resurrection—is it true?"

"If it is not true," he said, "then we are of all men most miserable."

"Do not quibble with me, Saul. Is it true?"

"It is true."

"Oh, then," she said, "I shall see you, when we awake." And spoke no more. She moved off down the quay-side with Luke. . . .

The wind was dead against them, so that it took them five days, dodging and shifting like a wrestler, to come to Troy. The night was dropping over

Mount Ida and the little isles, but friends had been waiting on the quay since dawn; and against Luke's plea that he was tired, he would speak to them. There was so much to say, and so little time. He went to an upper room in the city. Unostentatiously the two Ephesian athletes posted themselves at the door.

How long he had been speaking he did not know, when the sharp screaming of women stopped him. He did not understand, thinking possibly that the dagger-men of the Temple who had been following him in Greece as stoats follow a hare had tracked him down. Sopater of Berea went quietly out into the night. . . .

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these"; he spoke from the rough draft of a letter to the Galatians he had been dictating on the boat to Timothy; "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

"Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies—"

Sopater came back with a worried look. His face was white.

"What is it?"

"It is a little boy," Sopater answered, "who has fallen from a window."

"Is he hurt?"

"He—he—" Sopater hesitated. "He is dead."

Saul pushed his way out, and down the stairs, into the starlit night. He put the screaming women aside.

It was on the rough cobbles, limp, broken. It was like a half-filled sack. There was something

terribly final about the boy's lifeless arms. Luke was kneeling beside him. Luke got up. Luke's face was white. Luke shook his head.

"He was listening to you in the third loft," a woman sobbed, "and sleep came on with the lateness of the hour, and he fell."

"Hush, mother," Saul said.

He straightened the lad's arms, and kneeling beside him, suddenly he lay on him, embracing him mouth to mouth, heart to heart. He was so cold, the poor boy, so like the putty the carpenters use! And with a vast effort Saul sent the vitality out of himself. He could feel it leaving him, like blood from cut arteries. A little dizziness came over him, and he was cold to the knees. It seemed to him that he was cold to the knees.

"Live, child, live," he whispered.

He felt a murmur of life in the boy, and suddenly the boy's heart answered his like a faint echo, and then began to beat in rhythm with his, like two drums beating. He felt him stir.

"Sleep, child, sleep," he murmured, "and awake with the sun."

He rose up. Never had he felt so weak, so old.

"Trouble not yourselves," he told the women. "Life is in him."

He went back to the upper room. His knees were shaking. He could not see the rough notes in his hand.

He gathered himself for an effort. He leaned back, drawing great drafts of air down his nostrils.

"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. . . ."

§ 5

He had in his mind to meet James and Jude face to face at Pentecost, and to bring for the poor Christians in Jerusalem—sons and widows of those whom he had himself persecuted—the huge purse gathered in Macedonia, but before going he could not resist the temptation to see the beloved faces in Ephesus. He went by foot to Assos, sending Luke and Timothy ahead, and, taking ship there, drove over the blue carpet of the sea. The north wind came down steadily, making the great peaked sail bulge like a filled bag of corn. The shrouds hummed. They stopped overnight in Mitylene, in Sappho's Lesbos. They sped past Chios of the almond-trees, and cloud-covered Samos. They stopped at Miletus, while the elders of Ephesus came to see him. . . .

He could hardly speak for the filling of his heart and eyes.

"And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. . . ."

"On board, sir, on board!" the master of the vessel urged. "The little tide is ebbing."

He could not bear to look at the weeping faces by the quay. Steadily he sat by the great mainmast looking forward to the south. The wild coast-line dropped out of sight, and little islands, as of opal

and amethyst, shone in the blue sea. Afar off was purple Patmos, with its dark caves. Here was Cos, with its temple to Asklepios, delicate as a little tree. Distantly showed Rhodes, like some gigantic turtle in the sea, Rhodes of the eternal sunshine, Rhodes where once the great Brass Man stood at the entrance to the harbor; but his head and shoulders and belly were in the sea, so dreadful earthquakes are, and only his legs, like vast pillars, remained. . . . The sea was feathered with white. They came swift as a gull to Patara, where the great yellow river spewed into the violet sea. They changed ship, and went all night through the hissing ocean. At dawn Cyprus showed like a rosy cloud on their left-hand side. It dropped behind their quarter. Mount Carmel rose in the distance like a menace.

They stopped over at Tyre to unload and receive cargo, to unload grain from the Black Sea and wine from the Archipelago, and take on board heavy glass and purple dyes. Once more the great mainsail was hauled, and they were speeding southward, running free. Hermon, the ancient, the white-headed, showed in the east. They touched Ptolemais. They rounded Carmel, and the sweet plain of Sharon, fertile with wheat and barley, opened before them. At Cæsarea they left the ship.

He felt a little embarrassment at stopping in the household of Philip, whom himself had driven from Jerusalem so many years before. But the bowed old man, with the four beautiful daughters, with beautiful age-washed blue eyes, was hospi-

tality's and friendship's self. He embraced the harried, tired Saul with arms and heart. All Cæsarea came to do him reverence and honor.

While he was resting there one evening, talking to them, a wild figure with haggard eyes burst in on them. Something about the man was familiar.

"Who is this?" he asked.

"It is Agabus," he was told with awe. And Saul remembered the wild-eyed, wild-voiced man who had prophesied to them in Antioch of the coming famine in Jerusalem. Then he was fearsome, but now he was unearthly. His unshorn hair hung lank about his shoulders, and his sunken eyes had the gleam of a maniac. A formless shroud of sackcloth covered him, and nails were driven through his belt into his skin. Saul could see him raving and muttering in the storms of the wilderness. His voice had the croak of a raven, and his hands were like a bird's talons.

"What, poor Agabus, do you remember me?"

But the mad prophet uttered no word. He advanced on Saul with wide, unseeing eyes until the apostle felt a shudder as of death within him. He unloosened Saul's broad linen girdle, and binding it about his own feet and hands,

"Thus saith the Holy Ghost," he cried—he cried as though all the world were hearing him; "so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

There was a moment of silence, while the prophet stood like a man turned to stone. Timothy and Luke were white as the wall of the room. Quietly

Philip said: "Saul, do not go." But he would not be persuaded. And for the first time in his life Timothy cried. He buried his face in his arms, and his dry, passionate sobbing seemed to shake him from head to foot.

"What mean ye to weep and break my heart?" Saul said. . . .

They left Cæsarea, passing through the golden fields of Sharon, and passed Chabar-Saba, with a train of camels and small brown asses laden with provision for the poor of Jerusalem. They rested at Thamnath, and began to climb the rocky hills of Ephraim. At midnight they reached Gophna. There they rested to water their animals, and in the cool of the night they went through the high mountains of Judea southward. The moon had set, and the blue night covered them like a shroud. They were tired and silent, and nothing was heard but the quick patter of the donkeys' hoofs, the heavy soft pad of the camels, the tinkling of the bells, the distant bark of a shepherd's dogs. The east became gray as the sea, soft like a pearl; little rose-colored tinges appeared on the edges of the mountains. Suddenly an arrow of gold shot westward through the sky. The sun had glinted on a tower of the Noble, the Holy Dwelling. . . .

§ 6

They had met him—the Elders of the Church at Jerusalem—with the kiss of peace. They had met him with open hands. They had taken his money.

They had listened to his story of the conquest of paganism with politeness. Peter was in Antioch, and John with him, and here were only, among the swarming Ebionites, James the Thunderer and the little Jude. The others were Pharisees.

They smiled as he told them of the perils he had run. Ah! he must be reasonable. After all he had only himself to blame. He had had his little triumphs, they granted, at Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus, but did he not forget that the head of the Church was Jerusalem? "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.

"And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

"What is it, therefore?"

"Well, if the Jews heard he was come, naturally, they said, there would be trouble. Did he not expect trouble? Times were difficult. He was the friend of Romans. And mark! they said, their eyes flashing, where were the golden robes of the High Priest? Locked in the Tower of Antonia? Who could forget the multitude tramped to death in the porticos of the Temple when Cumanus rushed his troops from the Prætorium? And what had they done? Thrown a few stones at the Italian Band! Who had killed Jonathan, the High Priest? Felix, the procurator of Judea, had bribed Doras, a friend of Jonathan, to have him stabbed on the Temple steps. Well, if Saul

were a friend of the Romans, he was no friend of the Jews. But if he were reasonable— They paused. They folded fat hands over fat bellies, and looked at him with lean, keen eyes.

“I am a very old man, very tired. What would you have me do?”

There were four Nazarites, they explained, who were under a vow of purification. If he would purify himself with them, and pay their charges— He was a rich man, they purred—

“Very well!”

So for four days now he stood meekly in the pen of the Nazarites, while all came to look at him, and mock him. Here was the man who had preached against the Law of Moses, and now for his sins he was fulfilling the Nazarite vow. “And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and he shall offer his offering unto the Lord, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings. And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin offering and his burnt offering: and he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering,

and his drink offering. And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings." He who had thundered at Corinth and Thessalonica at all this facile mummary, stood now like the meanest whoremaster, waiting to be cleansed. The naked-footed priests passed him with a smile. When James passed he was magnificent and unctuous—and satisfied. The very beggars, fumbling for lice in their rags, cackled at his humiliation.

He stood now in the pen of the Nazarites, near the Women's Court, stupid a little, and ashamed of himself. Had he done right in submitting himself to avoid war with the elders at Jerusalem? He doubted it. The hostile priests, the multitude of pilgrims, went in and out; and over in the Antonia Tower the bored officer changed the guard, the sentry grounded his spear with a thump, and spreading his feet, gazed insolently at the chattering rabble, muttering to himself about the reeking natives. Saul, looking up, saw a face, livid with hatred.

It was Alexander, the coppersmith of Ephesus, who had been all but beaten by the Asian mob, and near him stood four youths, with full lips, with cold smiling eyes. The passing pilgrims eddied like a swirling river. Alexander's finger shot out accusingly.

"Men of Israel, help!" he cried. "This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the

people, and the Law, and this Place!" The pilgrims stopped, came nearer. Their eyes narrowed. Like a little rustling wind was repeated the name of "Shaûl!"

Tychicus and Trophimus of Ephesus, the young Greek athletes, appeared in the middle of the mob. Easily, swiftly, with quick arm and subtle shoulder, they had made their way into the pilgrim crowd. There was a smile on their lips, the smile of wrestlers about to battle. But Alexander had seen them.

"And further brought Greeks also into the Temple"—there was a froth on his mad lips—"and hath polluted this holy place."

Saul saw the furious multitude turn on the Ephesians, saw them disappear under a flood of blows. He started forward. Then the dagger-men rushed. He saw their design in a minute. If they could drag him from the Court of Women, through the gate called Beautiful, down the fifteen steps outside it, they would come to the Chêl, the middle wall of partition, where no alien, even a Roman, could set foot under pain of death. They were silent. They panted like dogs. Outside, somewhere, a shout arose, a great brazen cry, calling for the Roman soldiers. Old Gaius of Derbe was at his post. A dagger-man twisted his arm behind his back. "Make way!" they called. "Ho, Jews! Make way. We cut the throat of the renegade." The captain of the Temple and the Levites struggled to shut the gate in the faces of the mob. There was a pandemonium as of the forces of the air fighting.

Then the Roman guard crashed into the mob, hitting terribly.

They were picked, burly men, with a quiet, evil, fighting smile. They struck with the hilts of their scabbarded swords, short artful blows, that tore the skin and broke the bone. They struck silently, laughing silently; and, terrified as sheep before wolves, the white-faced mob fell back. Only one fanatic, with eyes staring out of their sockets, rushed forward. A centurion met him with a fearful backhander of his scabbarded sword. He waited silently, until the man was in hitting distance, and timed his blow beautifully, exactly as a javelin-thrower. The man's face broke like an actor's mask. He ran around the court, maddened, blinded with pain and blood, howling like a kicked dog. One of the dagger-men reached toward his left sleeve. A soldier gripped his wrist and, twisting it, hit the upper part of his arm with his huge fist. The bone broke like a twig.

"That's all, men!" the captain commanded quietly. "Put the chains on him."

They snapped manacles on Saul's wrist. They leaned down and hobbled his feet. Then, with a swift movement, they lifted him and carried him toward the fortress. The pilgrims below began to howl and leap in the air like balked hounds. The guards drew their swords and began whirling them like jugglers, smiling quietly. The crowd surged after them, hideous with rage, dancing, screaming, throwing dust in the air.

"May I speak unto thee?" He called the captain of the band.

"What? Can you speak Greek?" He was puzzled. "Look!" he said. "Aren't you the Egyptian Messiah who escaped when we went after your sweet little band of cutthroats? Aren't you Theudas of Alexandria?"

"I am a Jew of Tarsus," Saul shook his head. "Let me speak to the people."

The captain looked at the maddened mob below. He thought for a minute. "Perhaps you can clear up the mistake yourself," he said.

He stood up, surrounded by a belt of Roman spears, protected by a river of shining swords. He raised his manacled hands. Below him a great crowd had gathered from all parts of the Temple—Pharisees in spotless white, beggars in rags, Sadducees in robes of purple and green, kerchiefs of striped yellow and red. Faces came to him out of an old memory, men he had been to school with, under Gamaliel; men he had been in council with, when he was the Wolf of the Sanhedrim. They growled and spat as he stood there, with his torn tunic, and disheveled white beard. The sun glinted on the manacles of his upraised hands.

"Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense. . . ." Their own Syro-Chaldaic came quietly from his lips. They were so astounded they were silent. ". . . a Jew born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel. . . ." He felt he had them now. "As also the

High Priest doth witness and all the estate of the elders."

They listened to him, charmed as snakes are by the piping of a lute. He knew them; ah! how he knew them! Words caught them as the fowler's lime catches birds. They savored each trained oratorical phrase. They listened to his tale of visions and voices as children listen to tales of Solomon and the Jinn. The Roman captain stood by quietly, translating the Syro-Chaldaic into Greek in his clumsy, plodding way. What, in the name of the gods! was all this about?

"And He said unto me," Saul uttered quietly, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

At the hated word the mob's fury broke out afresh. Eyes started from their sockets; froth showed on lips; the screaming and cursing began afresh. "*Ish maveth!*" they called. "*Ish maveth!* He is worthy of death. *Ish maveth!*" The centurion looked at his commander.

"I'll be crucified if I know what it's all about," the captain of the band said. "They won't tell and he won't. He's guilty of something. That's evident. Take him and flog him. Perhaps the rope's end will make him talk."

They gave him no opportunity to speak. They rushed him to the triangle in the courtyard, and were binding his wrists with leather thongs. They stripped his back. On it already were the marks of scourgings. "Aha! an old one!" they said.

A dull fury seized Saul. He came here to die,

not to be scourged. He looked at the centurion, standing by, ready to give the word to strike. The executioner was baring his arm.

"Is it lawful for you," Saul asked with quiet emphasis, "to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

The centurion turned white as the barrack wall.

"Immortal gods!" he said, and went out.

He was back in an instant with the chief captain. The captain was incredulous. There was a little smile of contempt on his face as he looked at Saul's threadbare clothes.

"Tell me, are you a Roman?"

"Yes."

He was puzzled. He looked at Saul's poor cloak and worn sandals.

"It cost me a great price to become a Roman citizen," he smiled.

"But I was born free."

The quiet words of Saul carried conviction. The captain wavered; decided. With the roar of a bull he ordered the slaves to cut loose the cords.

"Why didn't you say so at first?" he asked pathetically, in the intervals of commanding a room, and water and food. "Immortal gods! A Roman says he is a Roman, and Rome stands by. Sir, is all this a religious matter?"

"Yes," said Saul.

"Better have it cleared," he advised. "I shall have the Sanhedrim meet. But it will be safer for you to stay in the Antonia, I warn you. Stay here to-night. Will you?"

"Yes, officer. And will you show me to my room," he asked. "I seem—" he tottered a little—"I seem to be very tired now."

§ 7

They sat on their cushions of red leather in the dim Council Halls, their faces beaked like hawks', their eyes like hawk's eyes. They sat in their tunics of white, girdled with leather belts or silk sashes, in their cloaks of purple and blue, of crimson and yellow. There they sat. There they sat, the Serpent House of Hanan; Ananias, the son of Nebedeus, released from Rome by the conspiracy of a mummer and his trull, his fat glutton's body, his coarse glutton's face, Ananias, the High Priest, soon to be dragged out of a sewer and killed by his own dagger-men. There were the sons of the older, the dreadful, but the great Ananias—keen bitter men. There were the sons of his old teacher Gamaliel, Simon and Joshua. Saul looked at them. Their faces were cold and reticent, like the faces of men who live by playing at dice.

"Men and brethren," he began, "I have lived in all good conscience until this day."

"Hit the swine on the mouth," came the thick voice of the High Priest. And a Temple priest cut Saul's lips against his teeth.

"God shall smite thee, thou whited wall"—Saul was pale with fury; the captain of the guard had started up with a smothered oath—"for sittest thou

to judge me after the Law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the Law?"

The assembled council were white with a sudden fear. They saw the burly captain's quivering nostrils, angry at the insult to a Roman. They looked at one another with meaning glances. Saul felt the animosity in the assembly against the Kohen ha-Gadul.

"Revilest thou God's High Priest?" quavered a Sadducee.

"I wist not, brethren"—Saul's gaunt tall figure stood out with dignity against the monstrous toad-like priest—"that he was the High Priest: For it is written," he sneered at the assembly, "thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

He waited an instant. His taunt went home. The Pharisees glared at Ananias with sullen rage. Their eyeballs were shot with red. The air became tense and quivering like the air before a storm.

"Men and brethren," Saul's voice rang like a Roman trumpet, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

All their dignity of white robes and blue-fringed head-dresses, of red judicial seats, and broad phylacteries; all their wisdom; their reverence of gray beards—all left them. They raged. Pharisee against Sadducee, like factions of village urchins against each other. They flung texts of the Law in each other's faces. They said beastly things against each other's folk. Only the sons of Gamaliel, his old school-fellows, strove for peace and quiet.

"We find no evil in this man," they pleaded as one; "but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him—" they were very gentle, very kind—"let us not fight against God."

None heard them; none paid attention to them. The clamor, the disputing, the cursing continued. Only the High Priest was silent. He sat still, with his body of some immense evil, bloated toad. His dull toad's eyes rested malevolently on Saul. And then without his head moving his eyes searched the hall. The captain of the band had noted them.

"Fall in around my prisoner!" he thundered. His voice crashed through the high screaming of the elders. With a rattle and clang, Saul was once more hedged about with the Roman spears.

"Right about! March!"

Saul had expected, in the Fortress Antonia, that as soon as the news of the trial came out, the byways would be full of Jews clamoring for his blood. But there was silence. Quietly the pilgrims went their way, ostentatiously looking aside, as though Castle Antonia, the Roman pikes, Saul's self did not exist. The pigeons thundered from the Temple eaves. The money-changers made their loud protests of honesty. There came the pathetic bleating of the sacrificial lambs. Timothy and Luke came to see him, and told him of the safety of the Ephesian wrestlers, and of old Gaius who was seeking an interview at Cæsarea with Felix. But when Saul asked after the brethren at Jerusalem, Timothy and Luke were silent, full of scorn.

"You must sleep, sir. You must drink this."

All day and all night he slept. He was so worn out that he lay on his couch like a dead man. Now and then Luke walked on tiptoe in and out of the darkened room. As Saul slept he seemed to see once more the Beloved Face, hear the Beloved Voice. "You must go to Rome," he thought he heard It say. When he awoke he was cheerful, but silent, thinking deeply, thinking long.

"A boy wishes to see you, Father," Timothy said. "The guard are just examining him," he smiled meaningly. "For a knife," Saul knew bitterly.

The boy was muffled to the eyes, but about his eyes there was something familiar, something that drew Saul's heart. He had something to tell Saul, he said—and even his voice waked some dim echo in Saul's heart. But his story was terrible. Forty fanatics, he panted, had sworn the most terrible *cherum*, not to eat or drink while Saul remained alive. They had gone to Ananias and engaged him in the plot. Their plan was this: to have Lysias, the captain of the troops, bring Saul once more before the Sanhedrim, on pretext of a more detailed trial, and on the way to the Council Hall, or in the Council Hall's self, aye, or even at the very knees of the High Priest, to kill him. If this had been known to Saul two days before he would have smiled. Let them; he was ready to die. But in sleep he had heard the Logos, and the word: Rome.

"You had better call the centurion, Timothy, and lead this boy to Lysias."

The boy sank on his knees and kissed Saul's hand, and following the centurion and Timothy,

left the room. All day the sun glinted on the colored pillars and brass gates of the Temple. The blossoms of the olive-trees dropped on Olivet, covering the ground as with snow. The oleanders of Kedron were crimson as the rising sun. From the turret of Antonia he could see the ancient cedars on the ancient hills. He waited, but no brethren of Jerusalem came to visit him. The sun dropped. The rams' horns of the priests announced the end of day. No longer could he see the dark arches of the city, or the pale willows in the windows of the houses near-by. Perhaps, now it was dark, they would come. But they never came. He left the roof of the fortress and went to his room. . . .

The captain of the city came in with a great cloak over his arm. With him was Timothy.

"Well, Rabbi," the captain asked, "are you feeling fit for a long ride?"

Saul looked at him in surprise.

"I am sending you to Cæsarea," Lysias explained; "you will be safer there. Felix, the governor, will take care of you."

He led him into the courtyard. Torches shone on the leather jerkins and brass caps of the Roman troops, glinted on the shining spears, showed the hogged manes and silken rumps of horses.

"Is all this for me?" Saul asked.

"All for you. Two centurions, four hundred men, and seventy horsemen, just like a king."

Saul looked around the courtyard. Timothy touched his arm.

"What is it, Father?"

"I thought perhaps that James, or some of the brethren—"

"They!" Timothy's scorn was terrible.

"But, Timothy, they sent the little boy. Wasn't that James' little lad? I thought I knew him."

"That was your sister's little boy."

"My sister's little boy! Timothy! Why didn't he say who he was? This old heart went out to him."

"He couldn't, sir," said Timothy.

"But why?"

"Your sister is of the party of James and Jude," Timothy said abruptly.

He was in the saddle now. A soldier adjusted the leathers to his feet. The soldier stood a moment, embarrassed.

"I'm sorry, Doctor"; he fastened Saul's right wrist to his left by a long steel chain. "It's the law."

"I know," Saul said. "It's nothing."

"My little nephew, my sister's little boy!"

"All right there?" the first centurion's voice shouted gruffly. "Ready? At the walk, go!"

CHAPTER XVI

HE could hardly believe, as he sat in the courtyard of Herod's ancient palace, that tomorrow he would be on his way to Rome. A prisoner still, with the hand of Rome on his shoulder, but on his way to the heart of the world. For two years he had fretted in the fortress of Cæsarea, outraged at the law's delay; and now suddenly he discovered that it was like a house to him. A house which he hated to leave. Every one had been so kind, but he had thought long to be free. He would no longer see the blue Mediterranean peaceful as a child in summer, the white blossoms of the almond, the storks of the red legs coming northward out of Africa; or in winter the smoking foam of the water as it crashed against the harbor's horns, or the little fragile snow powdering the courtyard while about the great brazier the Roman soldiers talked, Greek and Asian, huge negro and small dangerous Celt. Often he had listened to them discussing himself when they thought he could not hear—the mad rabbi, they called him, who believed that one Jesus had died on the cross and yet still lived. And though the cynical Italians smiled, and the Greeks shook their heads in pity for him, yet the vast Ethiopians told of dead kings who walked in forlorn majesty about their pyramids, and the Celts believed in the

bodiless, the terrible, the envious invisible Ones, who hated men. None could understand why he was kept prisoner. They were all kind to him. Even Felix, the most venal and shameless of governors, had been kind. Saul thought of the wicked, harried man with regret. How still and calm he had sat on the tribunal when Ananias, the glutton, and his hired orator, Tertullus, had come down from Jerusalem to claim Saul! There was the Roman governor of tradition, cool, impeccable, just. He had remanded the case on the plea that an essential witness, the Captain of Jerusalem, was not present. But Ananias knew he could not have Saul for slaughter. Half king, half footman, one part of Felix was ever warring against the other. He had protected Saul, risking the displeasure of the Sanhedrim. And yet a few days later he came to see Saul, and suggested that his freedom could be arranged. He was a procurator, yes, but he was a reasonable man. To keep up his state in Judea, a lot of money was indispensable. He had a vast number of charges: his private poet, his musicians, his personal sorcerer. And now he was newly married to a second queen, Drusilla, a Jewess of Saul's sect—Saul must see her! She had divorced Aziz, prince of Commagene, to marry him. A new wife! just twenty years old! The old one, the daughter of the king of Mauretania, had all but ruined him. Well, there it was! Everybody had their trials. Saul's was prison. His was money.

"But I am innocent, most noble Felix." And he looked into the governor's hard eyes. Felix only laughed, like a servant caught fishing for a bribe,

who has not succeeded and who bears no malice.

"Well, think on it, Saul."

He had Saul, at Drusilla's request, come and speak to them. Once; and never again! Saul spoke as John Baptist must have spoken before Herod Antipas and Herodias. Ghosts rose before the eyes of the ex-slave with the cruel look and the soft mouth, but the sister of Berenice only laughed.

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers," Saul thundered, "God will judge."

But Felix covered his quavering mouth with his hand.

"Go thy way for this time," he said politely; Drusilla smiled behind her fan. "When I have a convenient season I will call for thee." But nevermore did he seem to find convenient seasons. And yet he was not a bad man. He might have had Saul rigorously confined, but he gave orders to the constable in charge of him that Saul was to have every comfort, to see his friends, and when a runaway slave came to Saul, asking leave to be his servant, Felix permitted it. Indeed, he permitted everything: Saul's directing the work of evangelization from his prison, the presence of Luke and Timothy, of Aristarchus and Tychicus—everything but the bringing about of Saul's trial. When that was broached, he hinted at Lydia of Philippi, how rich she was, of his other friends, Gaius of Derbe, Philemon of Colossæ.

"But I am innocent."

"In this world, dear Saul, the innocent have to suffer."

He might have been happy here, but for the irritating fact that he was not free. That was something that bound, not only the body, but the soul. A thing like a spot on an ermine's fur, of which, so irritating is it, the ermine dies. Without the walls there was hatred. Not only from the Jews, who waited for him, as vultures wait for a dying eagle, but from the Church in Jerusalem's self. The Pharisee friends of James, referring to him occultly as Simon Magus, claimed that Saul had tried to buy his apostleship for money. Such was the thanks he received for having walked up and down Greece and Asia collecting money for their wants. Also there was a saying ascribed to Jude: that Saul wept, saying, "I have preached, cast out demons, raised the dead—and they have not crucified me!" Ah, that was cruel of Jude!

He had hoped, now that Felix was so embroiled in quarrels with the Jews, and must go to Jerusalem to answer for his procuratorship, that the ex-slave would bring about his trial before he left. But whether by worry as to the coming days, or from malice, the governor seemed to forget Saul. However, a new man was coming, Porcius Festus, whose reputation was that of gentility and justice. His imprisonment could not last much longer now. . . .

He had thought, so long had been his imprisonment, so quiet were the times, that he would only have to speak to the new procurator to have a small formal investigation and to be set free. But in Jerusalem hatred against him had fermented like wine, and the first request of Ishmael ben-Phabi,

the new High Priest, was that the renegade Pharisee should be delivered to the Sanhedrim. But the Roman general was shocked at the request.

"If he has done anything worthy of death, come down to Cæsarea and accuse him," was his abrupt reply.

They tramped into Cæsarea, horse and foot, with their gleaming standards of orb-topped bronze, their little banneroles cracking in the western breeze—picked men of the Augustan and Italic cohorts, and behind, on their thin-legged mules and small donkeys, came the Temple politicians, scribes with their ink-bottles and their books of the Law, Sanhedrists in cloaks of purple and blue, white-robed priests, with their rout of slant-eyed, quiet-spoken dagger-men. Saul knew nothing of it until he was called into the presence of the governor, sitting in his white robes with purple border in the ivory proconsular chair. The face of Festus was bronze-colored, his muscles were bronze, he might have been a bronze man dressed in robes for a festival; but his keen, man-probing eyes went quietly over the assembly, his own guards, the reptilian-eyed accusers on their mats of bright colors, and the poor chained old man.

A scribe, with many a flourish of rhetoric, with unctuous flattery of the new governor, laid the charges against Saul: of treason, spreading sedition in the Diaspora; of heresy, which was a matter for the Sanhedrim, and of sacrilege against the Temple. They sought to keep their dignity before the

procurator, but the sight of Saul was too much for them. Their faces scowled; their eyes gleamed with malevolence; they began to mutter and scream. The Roman soldier scented Temple secrets in all this tumult. There came a wariness on his face. He leaned forward.

"Will you go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged," he asked kindly, "in my presence?"

There was a lull in the shouting and the screaming. Saul looked at his accusers. Even their breath had stopped while waiting. He saw a dagger-man moisten his dry lips with his tongue; noticed him dry his moist palms on his thighs. He knew he would never see Jerusalem.

"I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat," Saul said quietly, "where my trial ought to be; to the Jews I have done no wrong;" there was a murmur in the mob, but Saul's eyes never left Festus' face.

"If I am guilty," he continued ever so quietly, "or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die. But if the things whereof these men accuse me are nought, no man—" his old age dropped from him like a cloak, he was erect and fearless—"may deliver me to them." He raised his chained hand. His voice rang through the ranged soldiery like a trumpet. "*Cæsarem appello!* I appeal to Cæsar!"

The Temple rout were dumb. The hated name was like a menace to them. They looked at Saul wondering. Eh, what was this? Festus turned to

his councilors. "Can he?" he asked. They nodded: Yes.

He looked a little hurt, did the Roman governor. Surely the old man might have trusted him to see justice done. And he looked a little sorry for the chained prisoner, for perhaps he knew that the august Nero was not the figure of justice good Romans loved. He threw his hands out.

"Cæsarem appellasti? ad Cæsarem ibis. Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar?" went the legal formula. "Unto Cæsar shalt thou go."

And in silence broken only by the chirrup of a sparrow they led him away. . . .

He was interrupted in his last preparations for departure to Rome, in seeing friends, in writing letters, in giving advice to poor Christians, by the visit to Festus of Agrippa, kinglet of Chalcis, near Gennesaret. He came over the mountains of Galilee, along the coast road of the Romans, with his beautiful, vicious sister Berenice. Their horses were harnessed in brocade and silver. Their slaves were dressed in tunics of red and yellow, and green. The blast of cow-horns and the rattle of drums and the clash of cymbals announced the last of great Herod's line. Lord of Chalcis, Guardian of the Temple, the decadent phantom king, with his sister, seductive as an opiate, bitter as death! Festus was glad of the visit, for here, in Agrippa, was a man who could tell him what to write in his minute to the Emperor. He told Agrippa of the case. Agrippa had heard often of the harried apostle. He asked to see him.

The king and his sister wore their little crowns of gold, and lay on couches one on each side of Festus' ivory chair. In Herod's great hall the swords of the legionaries, the armor of Chiliarchs gleamed; the scarlet sagum of the procurator, the fasces of his sergeants, showed masculine and forceful against the weak face of the little king, the abominable femininity of Berenice. There was scorn and a little hatred in Agrippa's weak mouth and vicious eyes, and in the eyes of Berenice were the unholy fires of Herodias. But Festus was kind. He turned to Agrippa with courtesy as Saul entered.

"Thou art permitted to speak for thyself," Agrippa said. He spoke as if he were a great ruler, as if king of Chalcis, Iturea, Trachonitis, nominator of the High Priest, Guardian of the Temple treasure, were symbols of actual power, and not trinkets allowed him by the master of the great Roman soldier beside him. Saul smiled inside his heart and head.

"I think myself happy, King Agrippa," he began courteously, "because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the charges of my Jewish accusers. Especially"—he was bland as any courtier in the room—"because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." Thus Saul to the favorite of Claudius, the friend of Nero. . . . "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you—" he recalled the king's Pharisee upbringing—"that God should raise the dead?" The brows of Festus were troubled, but the king was smiling and cynical. And

Berenice laughed her throaty, golden laughter in the hall.

"... continue to this day"—his voice was powerful and proud—"witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

"That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead"—his voice rang out in ecstasy—"and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

The assembled nobles looked at one another with curious surprise. Who was this Moses? Who were these prophets of whom the prisoner spoke, and whom the clever debauched king evidently knew? The stern Roman general looked pityingly at the aged speaker.

"Saul, you are beside yourself," he warned. "Much learning doth make thee mad."

"I am not mad, most noble Festus"—Saul's voice was quiet, unhurried—"but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely. . . ." Beneath the king's cynical smile was discomfort. Before the Phœnician nobles and the stern Roman soldiery he did not like it to be disclosed that he was once a student of theological arcana. These Romans were unreasonable. They wished everybody to be Roman, but they hated turncoats. He thought of his grandfather, Herod Antipas, faced by John Baptist's fearless eyes.

"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

But the king was not to be drawn. "Almost," he lisped languidly, "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And he waited for the laughter at his sally, but laughter there was none. The white-headed old man bowed with regal dignity.

"I would to God," said the old man sincerely, "that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were whether soon or late, such as I am"—he smiled a little, and raised his chained hand—"excepting these bonds," he added courteously.

The king was sullen, but Berenice was savage. To have been made fools of before these stupid Romans! The king gave the signal to rise, and passed out, as if Saul were not there at all. But he did not miss the kindly smile of Festus toward the quiet prisoner, nor the veiled scorn in the governor's eyes, as politely, as gravely, he paid deference to the Jewish king. With the Oriental instinct to agree, the king spoke volubly to Festus.

"This man might have been set at liberty," he explained, with quick gestures, "if he had not appealed to Cæsar." And he watched Festus out of his weak, cunning eyes. . . .

In his room in the dreary barracks he found Timothy waiting with his raised pen, and he remembered he had been writing to Philemon of Ephesus, asking pardon for the slave Onesimus, whom he was sending back to the good Ephesian, when he had been called before King Agrippa.

"Where was I, Timothy?"

". . . because the hearts of the saints have been comforted by thee, brother," Timothy read.

"Wherefore," Saul dictated, "although in the authority of Christ I might boldly enjoin upon thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, as Paul, the aged. . . ."

CHAPTER XVII

§ I

THEY did not know whether any longer the world existed, land, gardens, secure towns. For days, for how many days they did not know, all about them had been the roaring waters. The waves were bearded and yellow. The sky was bearded and yellow. Out of some terrible cold place between the stars the wind blew, savage with whipping rain, if stars there remained any, for none were seen. A sun there must have been, for a murky yellow, a dreadful sickly yellow came at some hours, only to show them the hopeless, barbarous sea. Of the great mast, that seemed high as Babel, only a stump as of a small riven tree remained. That the *artemo*, the little storm-sail, should remain, was a curious wonder, like a cat sunning itself on a dead, earth-quaken city.

Of the sea as they knew it; of the sea, harsh, black as iron; of the blue sea, blue as the flower of the flax; of the gentle singing sea—those might have been only stories they had heard as children, when they were very, very young. About them was a thundering obscenity, as if the bowels of the unfathomable deep had been riven, trampled disgustingly, a horror too great for human minds to know. There

were no gulls. There was nothing. There was worse than nothing. On the tenth day they saw a vast whale float, belly upward, in the distance, dead, futile as a mullet. Leviathan, who is so fierce that none dare stir him up, there he floated, dead, and no instrument of war had stricken him. They looked at one another in terror.

Then they knew they were doomed.

They had no fear any more. They had died so often in the last days, of each gust of wind; of the crashing mallet, of the furious insane hammering of the sea; of cold; of hunger; of drought—their lips were dry and cracked with salt, and only the driving rain moistened them torturingly. They were all but naked, their garments stripped from them by the mad, indecent blast. Their arms were frozen to the elbows, their legs frozen to the knees. When they spoke, which was seldom, they croaked like frogs. Their eyes were dull, like the eyes of dead fish.

They had all, too, gone mad. When the great storm had broken, one day and one night and another day, they had prayed and made vows to their deities, Poseidon, king of the sea, to Ino and her son Palæmon, and then seeing themselves in one gray whirlpool in which the abrupt bearded waves seemed the very fangs of hell, they cursed the gods. They tore their hair and shrieked and babbled. An Egyptian of Thebes, a Naked Philosopher, going to Rome to spread the tenets of his sect, spoke openly of what none but the initiate must hear. He said that they were now in the fourth moon;

that out of sea and river came elements that gave life to flower and man and tree, and another element which made the frozen, shining moon. And each of these moons had cracked and fallen to the earth; the first covered the earth with a vast coat of ice, the second had fallen in the sea and caused Noe's flood, and the third had smashed great Atlantis and killed the high race which builded the enormous sullen pyramids. Of these and other terrible occult things he spoke, crazed with fear and study. "And now the fourth moon has died, O sons of ignorance," he shrieked, "and we are all who are left of the teeming tumultuous orb." None listened to him save a great negro slave at the pumps, and he answered the philosopher with one syllable of obscenity. Yes, they were all mad, but they were apathetic now, like madmen the fever of whose period has passed.

Which was worse, the night or day, they did not know, for in the daytime, by the sparse bilious light, they could see how hopeless, how lonely all was, how hemmed in by the unmercy of the raging, unleashed waters. They could see horrors like majestic Leviathan, belly upward, like a poisoned trout, and not even a gull to prey on him. But in the black night, when their eyes were saved from tragedy, the polar winds were more merciless; the waters roared like behemoth, hissed like a nest of snakes, and in their fancy they could see the tossing waves charge like a regiment of horsemen. And now there was a cry of horror as the second paddle-rudder snapped, or a scream as a woman was swept

overboard. And if they had seen dead Leviathan, what other horrors, disturbed in their peace in the caverns of the sea, might not roam the waters—the huge serpent that broods in the caves of Greece, with its unimaginable maw, its green rock-crystal scales, its necklet of boar's bristles, its myriad child's feet, or some many-tentacled thing, which might reach its slimy arms over the shattered bulwarks, and take them one by one, in the darkness of the sealed-up stars, of Arcturus, and Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the South?

§ 2

Saul embarked at Cæsarea, a prisoner of Julius Priscus, who was returning to Rome with the Augustan Cohort, on a small coaster of Adramyttium. The prefect's plans were either to find a merchant ship for Puteoli at Adramyttium or Ephesus, or to march his men and prisoners to Troas, sailing thence to Neapolis, and marching along the Egnatian to Dyrrhachium, cross the Adrian to Brundisium, and march along the great Appian Way to Rome. The prefect was a ruddy-faced young man, with all the polish of an officer in a crack regiment, and Saul's custody was nominal. Indeed, Festus allowed the old man to have Luke with him as his personal physician and a secretary-companion in the person of the Macedonian Aristarchus. They bowled along to Sidon under a westerly wind; and stopping there, Saul got permission to go ashore. He wished to look up old friends he had known when he and

Barnabas passed through on their way to Jerusalem, but many old faces had gone, and those who remained he could hardly remember, and though he was glad to be free again, to walk in streets, to stop at booths, and buy some inconsequential thing for the pleasure of doing it, he was not sorry to be on board ship again, and on his way. . . . And now the wind, which had blown them so merrily toward the old Phœnician stronghold, helped them little. It shifted around to the northwest, and there was the tang of autumn, as it hummed through the rigging. They had hoped to sail straight for Asia, beating to windward, leaving Cyprus to starboard. But what with the wind, and the nearness of the autumnal equinox, they sent out to the northeast and north of the island, hoping to catch the current which sets northwest from the east of Cyprus, then westerly along the coast of Asia Minor. The waves leaped like dolphins. With each pitch the bows sent up a pyramid of spray. As they came near the island, the wind drew off, and they had smooth water under the lee of Cyprus. Great shoals of mackerel passed by, as if uneasy in their wanderings. Huge flights of birds went southward steadily toward Africa. Now, clearing Cyprus, they beat along through the sea of Pamphylia toward Lycia. The snow-white crests of Taurus showed in the setting sun, dropped hull down, were lost. They made Andriace, the port of Myra, snoring in on the starboard tack.

The master of the vessel had expected the snarling Etesian winds to have ceased by now, and the

seasonable southerlies to have set in. And he would go no farther, reckoning if the worst came to the worst to winter here. But the winds which frightened him had driven a great Alexandrian wheat-ship out of her course, and the Egyptian mariner, eager to discharge his cargo in Italy, had decided to go on, and offered the centurion of the Augustans transport. She was a large seaworthy boat, and what frightened the little coaster seemed nothing to the Egyptian master. Julius transferred his troops and prisoners into the big vessel. They set sail for Cnidus, with a weather shore, smooth water, and a favoring current. On board of soldiers, sailors, passengers, prisoners, there were two hundred and seventy-six souls.

They sailed along west by south, but the winds were baffling, and what with an occasional calm and an occasional squall, and the ship paying off, it was several days before they worked up to Cnidus. But the limestone mole of Cnidus was under a fury of waters. The wind blew offshore with savage gusts. There was no possibility of tacking in against wind and water, so, after a brief discussion, the master bore away. The great mainsail bellied as they ran southward, the waves crashing against their starboard beam, and running in little rivers over the deck. The seas were heavy, as of great sheets of lead; and when they struck, the ship moaned, moaned softly, like a boxer receiving smashing cestus blows. They left Rhodes to port, and choosing to run under the lee of Crete, instead of through the archipelago, west by south, they made Cape

Salmone. And with a weather shore, pitching, staggering, groaning, they made the little port of Kali-Limenes, the Fair Havens.

The centurion was calm and careless. He knew little of the sea. He listened as Saul spoke of his early ambitions to officer some great Roman trireme, and heard, with a soldier's curiosity, of his adventures on the deep. The Egyptian master, a squat, bearded man, smiled at Saul's nautical knowledge, as one who makes his livelihood by an affair always feels superior to him who does it for love. The little harbor was comfortless, and the town uninteresting, and the centurion longed for his native Tiber. The calking of sprung seams, the replacing of torn rigging, came ahead slowly. Yom Kippur passed, and a blood-red moon suffered an eclipse in the low sky. There was a feeling of disaster in the air. Now the month Tishri was half spent, and navigation became dangerous, the sky over-spread by clouds, giving small chance for the use of sextant. And Euroclydon, the treacherous monsoon of the Asian coast, might appear like a giant from the sky. But the master was for sailing around to Phœnice, where there was safe anchorage. Saul advised against it. But the harsh west winds suddenly ceased, and a southerly sprang up; and smiling, and with the centurion's consent, the master gave word to hoist the mainsail. Crete walked slowly past the weather beam. The high lands of Phœnice showed on their starboard bow. Every inch of sail was set as they ghosted along. Behind them the barge towed, moving quietly as a swan. Then

suddenly down the gullies of the mountains, from the northeast, the wind sprang like a tiger. It clawed at the great ship as a tiger claws at an elephant's flank.

All was darkness, all was panic, all was fury. One moment they were steady as a pyramid, and the next they were on their beam-ends, with the screaming passengers, the hoarse-throated sailors shouting, adding to the tumult. At the poop the pilots were straining at the paddles, striving to bring her into the wind. They lay there with the sails all but touching water, the deck slanting like the roof of a house. Then from the poop came the order to loose sheets and run for it. There was the shock of the strain as the barge's cable was tugged like a fishing-line.

They drove forward, pursued by great howling waves, each one of which seemed certain to poop them. They were like some animal pursued by a flock of wolves. Behind them the barge rolled and washed, now visible, now buried in a fury of foam. They ran under the lee of the small island of Clauda. And there, in a few miles of smooth water, they hoisted the barge on board. There, rounded to, they managed to get the gear down, and frap the ship with the great under girder. But the sea was furious and abrupt. They were sucked out of the lull into the pounding waters, and under the bare pole, they drove southward again. They had been saved from the fangs of the rocks of Crete and Clauda, but as they drifted leeward, over the vast rolling sea toward Africa, in each sailor's heart thundered the breakers of the Syrtis.

§ 3

And then, in the pitch black of the night, a sailor cried: "Land-o!"

They looked at one another in stupidity, as if they did not know what language the man was speaking. They looked into the night with their red-rimmed, salt-tortured eyes. And some one laughed bitterly as at a clumsy jest. But the master had noted, in the west, a glimmering creamy sheen, like the froth of Falernian wine. He heard a faint thunder above the tired baying of the sea. He rapped out orders like a madman. Sailors ran like monkeys over the wet deck in the darkness. There was a whirl and splash.

"No bottom!"

"Keep going."

"Thirty fathoms, no bottom."

"Twenty-five fathoms, no bottom."

"Twenty fathoms, no— Bottom at twenty fathoms!"

The roar of breakers was closer now. The creamy froth of churned water visible to all. The master danced on the poop like an insane man. "Break out four anchors by the stern. Work the hawsers through the paddle-holes. Soundings!"

"Fifteen fathoms!"

"Let go anchors."

There was a minute's anxious wait in the darkness. Then the master's voice spoke calmly, as in his own house:

"All right. You can come aft."

But the sailors remained in the foreship.

"Did you hear me? You can come aft."

"What about letting out the foreship anchors, sir?" It sounded like the sailing-officer's voice.

"All right, if you think she needs it."

Saul listened. It seemed strange to him that bower-anchors should be needed now. He heard grunts, the creaking of wood on wood. He plucked the centurion's arm.

"Do you hear?"

"No. I hear nothing."

"I cannot see, but I can hear." There was a soft splash, that was certainly not the splash of anchors, but the splash of the barge taking the water. "Julius," he warned, "the sailors are deserting in the barge. Do you hear?"

"They wouldn't do that!" the centurion laughed.

"But they are doing it. And if they leave the ship we are done. Listen, soldiers, unless those sailors stay on board you cannot be saved."

They ran forward, bounding like hunting-dogs. There was a scuffle in the darkness. "Ah, you would, you rats!" The swish of swords! A sergeant came back to report.

"You were right," the centurion said. "But the men have cut the boat loose."

"We will be saved," Saul said with confidence. "Every soul on board will be saved. Now let us eat, in God's name. You must make the men eat, Julius. They have had hardly anything for fourteen days."

Dawn broke, showing them high rocks and yellow sand, and spray drifting in clouds like rain. The grain in the vessel had shifted to port, and the master suddenly decided to shovel his cargo overboard, in the hope of steering the vessel in and beaching her on an even keel. They unloosed the rudder-lashing, and hoisting the little foresail, cut the anchors away. The thin line of a current lay before them. They drove on the beach. There was a jar as of a horse dashing into a wall. The ship's bows drove into the shingle and soft mud. Vast waves began to batter the unsteady stern. There was a rush to the bulwarks.

"Soldiers, mind your prisoners!"

"Shall we kill them, sir?" the sergeant asked the officer. "They might escape!"

"No!" Julius was firm.

The waves leaped at the stern of the ship like leopards springing at a tree in which prey was. With each crash of the sea the ship shook and groaned like some vital thing in agony. The gray dawn grew lighter. Out of the east came the icy winds of dawn. On the foreshore they could see small brown men dancing like monkeys.

"Sergeant, look to your men and prisoners. Now, Rabbi," Julius turned to Saul.

They leaped into the sea.

§ 4

For all the gray dawn the land was alive with the humming of bees, so they knew that they were on

Melita, the island of honey. The small brown Phœnician men spoke a barbarous dialect, half Syrian, half Greek, and looked with longing at the salvage washed ashore on the beach. The passengers lay on the shale, exhausted, bruised, sick—Luke going among them, helping here, helping there. The Augustan troops were lined up on the shore, answering the roll, quietly, orderly, as though in barrack yard. Saul tried speaking to the little brown men. He asked for food, and wine and fire. They chattered among themselves, looking at him with mild, brown eyes. They looked at his wrist, which the marks of the chain had galled, and the salt water turned into a great sore.

“A fire, cannot you understand?”

He went about gathering little roots of furze, plucking here and there for dry bits in the crannies. He compelled them with his eyes. Now on the beach the Roman soldiers, fallen out of formation, reeled and tottered, as though they had embarked from dry land on a heaving deck, instead of from a ship on to solid land. On a cask, Luke, helped by Aristarchus, was rolling a woman evidently dead. The islanders were muttering about “murderer,” and, with awed faces, helped build the fire. A man struck flint and steel.

The fire caught. Great gusts of acrid smoke rolled inland. Saul leaned forward, tending it with care. The islanders kept aloof from him, watching him as monkeys might watch a lion, warily, a little uncertain as to what he would do. As Saul pushed

another dry fagot into the flame, he felt the back of his hand struck as by the edge of a scabbard. He stood up.

"Oh, look! look!" the islanders squealed. "The gods have struck the murderer. The gods have struck the murderer who escaped from the sea."

It was black and heavy and horrible, and it hung to his hand by its bent fangs. The very force of its blow had driven its teeth into his hand, as a sword is driven into a wooden plank. He looked at its metallic black back and horrible yellow belly, and with an exclamation of disgust flung it into the flames.

"Bring wine, strong wine, and barley-cakes, and oil," he told the staring islanders. "That will be to mine account."

But they ran from him as though he were a leper. They ran to the foreshore, chattering as they ran. Suddenly he felt weak and tired. The warmth of the fire was unfreezing his numb knees and hands. He felt guilty to stay here while the poor wretches on the shore were suffering. He turned to go down and help. And suddenly Luke, panting with running, stood before him. Behind him were the islanders with their stupid peasants' faces. Luke's face was frightened and drawn.

"What's this, sir, that you have been bitten by a viper?"

"Something, Luke, bit me, but nothing particular—"

"Let me see!"

He caught the old man's hand, and felt the punctures on it. They were clear and sharp, like the cuts of a small knife.

"It's not a viper," he smiled; "you'd have died by now if it were, bloated like a toad. Where it is? Let me see." He fished in the fire with a stick where the beast was, choked by the smoke. He jumped back with a little cry. His face was white as a woman's.

"Great God of us all!" he said hoarsely. He looked at the old man, with his white beard, his beautiful white head, erect, compelling, in the dawning of the day.

Out of the throats of the islanders came a great shout.

"Send for Publius, the Protos," they called. They danced like children. "Tell him that to the island of honey a great god has come." They knelt in awe. "A great god has walked unto the island of honey out of the shattered sea."

CHAPTER XVIII

§ I

THE house by the river was big and bare and clean as an Essene monastery, and its vestibule was thronged with beggars. Under the polished Fabrician Bridge the tawny water shot like a rapid. And to the flower-girls on the bridge, the hawkers in the streets, the house was ever a wonder. The beggars were never turned away, though sometimes there was nothing for them, but that was because there was nothing in the house. Every four hours a new prætorian guard would go in, and the one relieved go out. And one never knew what visitors there would be for the old man—a Roman senator; a Jewish priest, who would be hissed and spat at as he passed by; some traveler out of the East in curious Asian dress; some lady of quality, dignified, grave, a matron of the Claudian days.

Some things about the house were a mystery, as this: that the old man was a Christian at all. For all knew that the Christians were turbulent, always in seditions against the Empire, wine-bibbers, loose-livers in even loose-living Rome; that they worshiped a god with an ass's head who had been crucified somewhere in the East. The old man was

supposed to be one of the heads of the Christian cult, and yet after the burning of Rome, when the head of the Christians—the Jew, Cephas—had been crucified head downward for complicity in the dreadful crime, the old man Paulus had been merely arrested, and kept under *observatio*. Of course Cephas was a Jew, and the old man was a Roman. But it was funny the old man should be a Christian at all. There was none more clean than the old man—the easy-virtued flower-girls knew that by instinct! And if wine passed his lips it was in the smallest quantity. Any one could see the old man had education, was a philosopher! How could he believe in a god with an ass's head! This was a mystery.

But nothing else in the house was a mystery. Really, it was funny how open everything in that house was. Sometimes they would be hungry, and some friend would send a cart of food, and the beggars would have it, as a dog will snap something out of your hand. Often only for the guard the old man and his physician and secretary would have nothing to eat. The *ædiles* would have cleared the vestibule of beggars, but the old man pleaded for them. For scum who wouldn't work, the flower-girls said indignantly, who laughed at him for his generosity, who cursed him when he had nothing. It was too bad. His physician, too, was as foolish as himself. He was always ready to help and heal, and would not accept the meanest bronze coin for it. So clever a physician too, Lucanus, he might have had his shop in the fashionable quarter of the Golden Mile-stone, and had slaves, apprentices, a

country-seat. He was always easy of access if you had aught wrong with you.

The old man, also, was easy of access, if you could slip past the secretary Pudens. Pudens was an ascetic aristocrat in the forties, formerly a teacher of philosophy, and he guarded the old man like a watch-dog, and yet if you were broken-hearted you might succeed in seeing old Paulus. Not quarter of what he said could you understand, but his voice, his aged eyes, in a manner refreshed you, made you feel as if it were the April of your life again, before there was ever a trouble, except of childhood, or a darkness in your heart.

As to being a prisoner, the girls laughed. Except occasionally for a surly guard, who wanted a little wine-money and was not particular how he got it, in the house, except during the review of the officer, old Paulus was unchained. Indeed, the young prætorians would help, half carry him to the bridge to enjoy the sunshine. Ah, they were gentle, those young prætorians, the flower-girls found. They would point out to the old man the knights' houses on the hills, the boys swimming in the river, a wedding passing by: the bridegroom with his close-cropped hair and white robe, the bride with her red girdle, and her bunch of wool and spindle in her hand. Or they would buy, or try to buy rather, because the girls would not take money, a flower from the girls for the prisoner. Anything to take the hurt look from the old man's stricken eyes as he looked over the blackened, gutted city.

But they had not seen him for many days now,

and the girls wondered if he were ill. He was lucky to see, was Paulus. But apart from that, they were sorry if anything should happen to the old man.

§ 2

It seemed to Saul that Stephen, that Cephas, that all who had died in violence had had a better end than his. What his own end would be he did not know. But looking on burned Rome, he saw only his burned heart. Four years ago when they had brought him a prisoner to Cæsar his chains had been a triumph. Paul the prisoner had been a name to conjure with. At the market-square of Appius, at the Three Taverns, friends, believers, had come to welcome him, and to escort him to Rome. Meadow and hill, orchard and river, the pale-blue Sabine Mountains, had all smiled on him. The Appian Way rang with nightingales. All was a triumph. And when Burrhus, the one-armed chief of the prætorian guard, had come to set him free, telling him all documents relative to his case had been lost in the ship, he felt a little disappointed, hoping to have spoken before Nero. But the young emperor had no time or inclination to hear of strange gods.

With money sent by Lydia of Philippi, he lived in a house near the river, where he could be in easy touch with the Jewish colony. Now that Claudius was dead, and Nero on the throne, and the Jewess Poppæa spoken of as Cæsar's approaching wife, they began to return out of Smyrna, out of Corinth, out of Palestine's self. Already again public opinion

was high against them, for their chicane, for their political turbulence. But Poppæa was Cæsar's mistress, so the Romans had better hold their tongues. Saul saw quickly how the land lay and from the prison sent for the chief men of the Hebrews. It was better to have them as friends than enemies if he were to spread his light.

"For the hope of Israel," he said, "I am bound with this chain."

They were politic. They said they had received no written communication from Jerusalem against him; indeed, they had heard no evil about him. They only knew that everywhere the sect of Christians was in ill repute. Saul saw they were not quite honest. He thought a little. After all, the feeling in Rome could not be as harsh as that in Jerusalem. Moreover his ship was the last to leave Cæsarea that year. They could have had no warning against him, either by that or since. He invited them to set a day on which he could expound his views to them. They consented. Saul smiled.

The story was the old one. All day long he hurled Messianic arguments at them, quoted from the prophets, shook the weak ones, interested the Jewish proselytes, and when the argument was at its height, flung them forth.

"Well spoke the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers: Go unto this people and say: Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have

closed: lest they should see with their eyes," he thundered, "and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them."

And he wiped his brow. He was worn but satisfied. Next Sabbath every synagogue in Rome would be a-bubble with argument.

§ 3

Before now there had been meetings of Christians in Rome, but they were held in secret, in small houses, in sand-pits, in quarries, in caves—for none knew how the boy-emperor would treat a *religio nova et illicita* which spurned the divine Cæsars for a man murdered in Jerusalem. Slaves from the docks, joiners, shopkeepers, ladies, philosophers, gathered to hear the sermon Christ preached from the Mount. But Saul tore the veil of secrecy from the gatherings. Boldly he preached to them, no man forbidding. In the peristyle of his own house he spoke to them. He looked at the handful of Jews who listened.

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.

"That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

"Who are Israelites. . . ."

He swept them into his heart with one wide gesture.

"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your conceits. . . . If it be possible as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." He did not see, what with the shadows of the house, what with his aged eyes, the sullen look on the faces of some of the men. "Render, therefore, to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear—" An old freedman, worn with toil and age, was about to interrupt when his comrades pulled at his sleeve, whispering to him.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand—" The muttering dockers threw their heads up and smiled in the darkness. "To God only wise," he finished, "be glory through Jesus Christ for ever."

Saul was warned by friends that many of the new converts were dangerous men. In law-courts they refused to take an oath, menacing the trustworthy administration of the Law. They spoke bitterly of the emperor, alluding mysteriously to a new king who would appear and make good the world for the poor. They sneered at the circus and amphitheater. They refused to offer the customary incense to the emperor's statue. They shouted at Roman women in their lecticulæ. A mob of Christian communists had seized provisions coming down the Alban Hills. Saul could hardly believe it. Everywhere he spoke of the duty of the slave toward master, of the citizen toward the Empire, and no word was said against him. What he took for deference to his teaching was deference to his years and white beard.

When Cephas came from Antioch to Rome, he left on his long-visioned visit to Spain. Who knew what new difficulties Cephas might raise. He took boat at Ostia for Tarraco. . . .

§ 4

At Tarraco, at Cæsaraugusta, at Hispalis, and as far east as Gades, past the Pillars of Hercules, he found synagogues of Alexandrian Jews, rich men, touched with all the refinement of Egypt. They received him with hospitality, listened to him with courtesy, but were not to be convinced that the Man of Galilee was the Messiah. They were rich and learned, and suddenly Saul found he was old. The body of humiliation became more humiliating than ever. The cold bothered him more; the heat took all vitality out of him. And there was no more fury in his speech. He was becoming quiet and gentle. In the spring nights, in the dusk as of Theocritus, he sat in the houses of the courteous Spanish Jews, and listened to their erudition. All was so complex, so little profound. They had no deep simplicity. Suddenly he began to fret for Greece and Asia. What were they doing in his churches? And bidding his hosts farewell, he took ship for Massilia, where the Romans had builded a new city on the old Phocæan hemp-walk. At Massilia he heard strange things of Rome. Peter, believing himself to be as safe from persecution as Saul had been, was, according to report, doing a thousand foolish things, vulgarizing himself by public argument with Simon

Magus, Felix's old magician, who had attached himself to the household of Marcellus the senator. All better-class Rome was laughing at the pretensions of the two Hebrew thaumaturges. There was worse than this. Peter was seeking to have the women converts, Xanthippe the wife of Albinus, and others like Nicaria and Doris, seek to convert their husbands through the intimacy of the marriage-bed. This was abominable. Also, Peter was rumored to have received a large sum of money from the notorious Chyse, who, it was said, had love-affairs with her own slaves. And when taxed with taking it from so infamous a woman, had laughed and said he knew nothing of her conduct. He only knew the poor needed the money.

Around Peter now were the hotheads who dreamed of a revolution, not of the Senate and people against Cæsar, but of the slaves against the rich. Nero had become worse than the hatred of Rome: he had become the laughing-stock, what with his concerts, which all must applaud; his racing in the circus, where none must pass him. Seneca had left him, and old Burrhus was dead, some said by poison. The people, slaves, citizens, discharged soldiery, knew that sooner or later Nero was doomed, and were ever ready to rise. They found the congregations of the Christians an easy shelter for their organization, their treasonable plotting. Rome's church was in a dangerous position, but could Saul interfere? He thought not.

From Massilia he went to Ephesus, by way of Puteoli, Syracuse, and Rhodes. Once in Ephesus,

his heart sank. The Church he had left he could not recognize. Philetus and Hymenæus were strong factors in the Church, and were preaching Knowledge. They denied the resurrection of the dead, and taught that the true resurrection was when the soul awoke from the death of ignorance to the light of knowledge. Also there were men in the churches striving to wreck them for the sake of the Temple at Jerusalem. All these men were so strong, so young, and he was so old. He went to Crete, to Macedonia, striving to save something out of the wreck. But wherever he appeared there seemed to be the most savage antipathy to him. A general epistle from Jerusalem, dictated by Jude, written into Greek by a secretary, had been sent around the Asian churches. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful to me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares," the vicious letter went on, "who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men—" Saul knew Jude meant himself, and Luke and Timothy and their friends. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves; clouds they are without water, carried about by winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Ah, the savage, the bitter, the unjust Jude!

Occasionally he would find some young proselyte who kept the Crucified before his eyes, whose belief was like a devouring flame, and he would sit quietly and listen to him. "He ate and drank on our account, though He was neither hungry nor thirsty; He suffered and bore revilings for us; He died and rose for us. He will comfort you that you love Him, this Great and Small One, this Beautiful and Ugly One, this Young Man and Old Man, appearing in time, yet utterly invisible in eternity; Whom a human hand has not grasped, but is now held by His servants: Whom flesh has not seen and now sees. This Jesus you have, brethren, the door, the light, the way, the bread, the water, the life, the resurrection, the recreation, the pearl, the treasure, the seed, the vine, the plow."

The young preacher's eye might find the bent shoulders, the white, tired head, and awe would come into his voice.

"But here is the Apostle Paul, who knoweth all the mysteries, all the secrets. Father, speak to us."

"All mysteries, all secrets have gone from me, beloved," the old traveler would say. "I am only an old man, to whom one day a thing of wonder happened, and who has gone over the world, seeking people to tell it to. . . ."

But the occasional orator, or poet, or little child whom he found to believe were small consolations in the great weariness that lay upon him. So many people were dead whom he knew to have been friends of his, and in their relatives' faces he could read doubt. And people said bitterly that the

Galilean had prophesied that the world would end, with all its injustice, and yet it seemed to go on as strongly, as unjust as ever. And to this he had no answer. He blamed himself bitterly for the ruin of Timothy's life at times, and of Luke's. And thought: they have only me, an old, nearly blind man, with a mind that wanders at times, who should have had buxom wives and laughing children. Lydia sent letter after letter, messenger after messenger to him, to come and rest at Philippi, but he felt that she might read in his eyes what a failure he thought himself to be. Ah, no! He could not go to Lydia.

One thing was a wonder to him. John-Mark had grown wise and brave, and had sent word to him by Timothy that he was at the old man's service. John-Mark, over whom he had quarreled with Barnabas! Dear God! Barnabas! Damascus! Antioch, and the rocky Lycaonian road! And that strange Greek girl, whose name he had forgotten! How very long ago! How very long, how many scars ago!

§ 5

In Nicopolis of Epirus he heard the dreadful news that great Rome was gutted like a slum-house, and that the emperor, who had laughed like a maniac to see the flames lick like snakes' tongues, had suddenly, driven to it by Poppæa, made an onslaught on the Christian sect. He had said that they had set the tindery city aflame, as Queen Boadicea and the men of Britain had burned London three

years before. And Cephas was dead, crucified off-hand as a ringleader. He set off for Rome at once, alone, taking passage from Apollonia to Brundisium. At Brundisium he was arrested.

He made no protest when the Roman officer placed his hand on his shoulder, and asked him if he were not Saul of Tarsus, known as Paul. He answered quietly that it was he and asked why he was taken. He was told it was on suspicion of being implicated in the riots and burning of Rome, and that the charge was the broad one of *læsa majestas*. Up the great Appian Road he walked chained to a soldier, like any runaway slave. Now spring had come, and they went through a land of small green lizards and lemon-colored butterflies and peach-trees in flower, but his heart was dark as burned Rome. The posts from Brundisium raced along the road to the Golden Mile-stone, and with each stop on his journey the old man hoped to see some face he knew. But none came to welcome him. He began to think that everybody he knew in Rome was dead. He did not dare to ask his guard as to this one or that one, fearing their answer.

In Rome he was locked up in his cell in the prætorian barracks, and though he claimed the privileges of a citizen, born free, yet little leniency was shown to him. Tigellinus was prefect of the guard, and there was little help to be got from that blood-stained friend of Nero. In his prison none came to visit, and now he found what it was to be without money. He could find no procurator to aid him, and what evidence the informer would set

against him he did not know. Luke he knew was in the city somewhere, striving to see him, but perhaps Luke had been arrested, too. And then one day the door of his cell was flung open, and old Onesiphorus of Ephesus and Luke appeared. They could not any of them speak for a full minute. All three wept. Though little could be done, Onesiphorus granted, each day of delay was valuable. Already in Rome opinion was turning against the emperor, and it was whispered that not the Christians but the emperor himself had been at the bottom of the burning. Half shrewd, half mad, he had seen the way to build a new city of marble over the gutted tenements, and to satisfy his own and the dreadful Poppæa's lust for cruelty. But these things must not be discussed, Onesiphorus warned. Now, as to news—

“What of Cephas?”

The old Ephesian's face was drawn. Cephas had gone very valiantly to his death. He had had the chance to escape, had, indeed, been free in the streets of Rome, and people close to Poppæa would have been glad to see him back in his native Galilee, but in the middle of the night he had turned back and walked into his captor's hands. It was whispered that he had seen the Face; heard the Voice. “*Quo vadis?* Whither goest thou?” He had faced death with great gallantry.

“How did he die?”

“On the cross. Head downward.”

“And the others, Onesiphorus.”

“Some were clothed in wolfskins and hunted by

wild dogs; some had pitch thrown over them, and were set alight—”

“Onesiphorus! Onesiphorus!” Luke broke in. “Tell him no more.”

Now, although Luke and the Ephesian continued their visits, he heard little and feared the worst. And on the day when he was marched to the courts, he met not a single kindly face. He searched for Onesiphorus and Luke, and though they were in the basilica, he could not see them. Evidently Onesiphorus had failed to find an advocate. He saw dimly, so tired were his eyes from the night of the cell, a pot-bellied sneering man in the ivory curule chair, and around him the *judices*, with their voting-tablets; and the assessors, to clear up points of law. On each side of the court the seats were filled.

The hearing was but the *prima actio*. The charges against him were three: of disturbing the Jews in their religion, which was secured to them by law; of desecrating the Temple, which was under the guardianship of Rome; and of violating the public peace of the Empire as the ringleader of a factious sect. The charges were to be heard one by one. An informer gave evidence of the agapæ of the Christians, of the love-feasts and breaking of bread. A Jewish doctor denied this was Judaism. This was an illicit and new religion.

The old man was sick, evidently, and deserted. But none expected the quiet power of him. Quietly, moistening his lips, he turned away from judges and the figure in the chair. He spoke straight to the Jewish accusers.

"Multifarum et multis modis olim Deus loquens patribus in prophetis. God who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, *novissime diebus istis locutus est nobis in Filio,* hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. . . ." He went straight to the root of the matter. "*Filius meus tu,*" he quoted from Samuel, "*ego hodie genui te.* Thou art my son, this day have I begotten Thee."

The accusers were sullen. Coldly, calmly, this terrible old man was stripping their religion stark naked before the Gentiles. His measured, polished voice was carrying conviction. By the words out of their own prophets' mouths he was contradicting them.

"Hoc autem testamentum quod testabor ad illos post dies illos, dicit Dominus.

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord—"

The judges were bothered in this maze of theological argument. The cruel-faced man in the magistrate's chair was frankly bored. The accusers spoke quickly together.

"Ideoque et nos tantam habentes impositam nubem testium; wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with such a cloud of witnesses—" It seemed to the Jewish accusers of heresy that the man was sneering at them. They appealed quickly to the *præfectus*.

There was the rustle and scratching of tablets as the verdict was taken. "*Non liquet,*" an officer announced. "It is not proven." There was a movement

in the courts as if the heavens wished to applaud but dared not.

"Am I, then, free?" Saul asked the guard.

"On the first count, yes."

"When will the hearing on the other counts take place?"

The officer shrugged his shoulders.

"When Cæsar wishes."

"Was that Cæsar in the curule chair?"

"That was Cæsar."

The axed fasces of the lictors closed about him. The guard manacled his wrist. They led him back to the barracks. In a little while Onesiphorus came to him.

"We are getting you placed under observation only, old father, in your house again."

"Onesiphorus," he said, "why take this trouble? I shall never be free. To-day I have been rescued from the lion's mouth. But for how long, dear God, how long? I could almost wish I had felt the executioner's ax this day!"

§ 6

Spring vanished, and burning summer came. The days of the mad star were in Rome, and heat hung in a shimmering cloud above the yellow river. A plague of flies, as of Egypt, descended on the city. The senators, and people of the court, withdrew to the hills or the sea-coast, and Rome seemed empty. But in his house by the river the old man lived on and fretted. Though all was ready, his de-

fense on the two other counts of the indictment close-knit and impossible of controversion, yet the law-courts were closed, and when he would be called again none knew. One day nearly all the Jews who had laid information against him had left the city, as by a preconcerted movement, and soon there came to Rome terrible news—of slaughters in Cæsarea, and the Sea of Galilee red with blood. And now Nero's self was not safe, it was whispered. He hated the Senate, he made no secret of it, and the Senate hated him. How this intolerable state of affairs would end, no man knew.

But war and civil commotion and the imminent ruin of kings made no difference in the old man's lot. Regularly as the movement of the stars, the guard changed. The soldier on duty put on his helmet and returned to the barracks, and his mate who relieved him took off his corselet and short sword, and sat down opposite the old man. Never was there an instant's privacy. Onesiphorus had returned to Ephesus, to see after his household in the troubled days. The few men who had come to Rome to help he had despatched to various cities—Crescens into Galatia, Titus into Dalmatia, Tychicus to Ephesus—to bring him news of how his friends were. From him now Luke would not go. The white-haired physician's hand was always on his brow, his eyes always on the old man's face.

At times it seemed to the physician that the old man could not last out the night, by such a little thread did his body hang to his soul. He was so used up, so worn, like an old coat through which

light can be seen. At one minute he could see in the old man's face the knowledge that he was all but dead, and a faint wonder as to whether Azrael the Messenger of God or Nero's lictor would call him first. And then suddenly there would come a change, and a vitality as of his early days would appear in him, and he would be full of plans for the future, of how he would get into Macedonia, for after his defense they could not but let him go. And some burning phrase would fall from his lips, and Luke would look in wonder at the giant who had faced the mob in the Temple, had spent a night and day swimming in the deep, who had withstood the magician of Cyprus. But Luke was not deceived. Just as suddenly again he would be weak as a child, and begin dozing off, and himself and the guard would carry the old man into his bed. He was so light that the soldier wondered.

Luke had his problems. What would he do when the old man died? He had been so long his personal physician, his companion, his courier, that he could hardly imagine a world in which the apostle would be absent. And he had so many secrets to keep from the old man of the faithlessness of some friends, and of reports he heard from Corinth, where Apollos was. When Phygellus and Hermogenes deserted him, his heart was broken, and when Demas went, the old man turned his face to the wall, and would not speak. So now when anything of the kind happened, Luke lied to him, and it was not very easy to lie to him. His worn-out eyes could be very sharp. Also Luke was bothered for money. He

hated going always to friends nearly as poor as themselves for help, but the old man must have fruit and medicines and a little wine. He would have gone out and worked to get it, but he could not leave the old man. Also he was troubled about the secretary, Pudens, who was affianced to be married to the daughter of a captive British king, and this could not take place, so afraid were they all of how Saul would feel about it. Everything was in such a mess, and yet what would life be like when the old man was gone?

§ 7

Luke came in from the market-place, where he had been making some purchases. As he passed through the vestibule, the socket of the door squealed in the lintel, and the secretary put his finger to his lips, pointing at the passage to the peristyle.

"Asleep?" Luke asked. The secretary nodded. The guard was seated against the basin in the hall, cleaning his short sword with shark-skin. Luke came over to Pudens. He noticed the notes of the secretary's tablet.

"He has been working, Pudens. You ought not to have let him."

"Only writing to Timothy," the secretary said, "and I thought it better not to thwart him, seeing how he frets about the lad. He will be much happier when Timothy comes."

"He will never see Timothy," said Luke.

"Has anything happened?" the secretary looked up quickly.

"No, but—he will never see Timothy."

They were silent. They listened, thinking they could hear the old man's light breathing. The little purl of the fountain, the swish of the shark-skin over the prætorian's sword, prevented it. They could hear nothing.

"What did he want of Timothy?" Luke asked.

"Oh, a lot of things, a lot of things," the secretary answered. "And his old cloak."

PAULUS
OBDORMIVIT

Good Friday, 1926.

[illegible]

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